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**Current Developments And Prospects For The Future:
French Security Policy In A Changing World**

by

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**Current Developments And Prospects For The Future:
French Security Policy In A Changing World**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an analysis of the effects of recent historical events on the future of French security policy. The end of the Cold War division of Europe, the rebirth of Germany, the growing pressures for major defense cuts, the calls for France to review its nuclear doctrine, abandon its independent policies and rejoin NATO's integrated military structure, and finally, the lessons of the recent Gulf War, are issues that threaten to divide France in a way that has not occurred in several decades. The fundamental question for the decade of the 1990s is how to, or perhaps whether to, preserve the legacy of national independence and grandeur handed down by former President Charles de Gaulle. The thesis concludes that the Gaullist myth of grandeur and independence can no longer be sustained. French security must now be achieved by strengthening ties with NATO, and building a stronger West European defense posture centered around close Franco-German relations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the year 1989, France celebrated the bicentennial of its revolution. 1991 marks the 33rd birthday of the drafting of the constitution of the Fifth Republic. By French standards this is a remarkable record since the average life of the country's 15 constitutions or charters since the year 1791 has been 13 years and four months. Ironically, the French have spent the last several years celebrating their history and the man most associated with the last 50 years of it, Charles de Gaulle, precisely at the time when a new mood of uncertainty and debate over the future of the French political identity appears to be at its height.

The end of the Cold War division of Europe, the rebirth of Germany, the growing pressures for major defense cuts, the increasing calls for France to review its nuclear doctrine, and the urging by allies for France to abandon its independent policies and rejoin NATO's integrated military structure, are issues that threaten to divide France in a way that has not occurred in several decades. Many Frenchmen now believe the choice is one of resignation at being one nation among many in a German-led Europe, or continuing to pursue Gaullist-type foreign and defense policies which are becoming increasingly difficult, if not soon impossible, politically and financially, to sustain.

The fundamental question for the decade of the 1990s is how to, or perhaps even whether to, preserve the legacy of national independence and grandeur handed down by De Gaulle that is so

clearly associated with the Fifth Republic's security policy. In one U.S. defense analyst's view:

France's autonomous defense posture and, since 1966, special status as a non-integrated member of NATO were predicated upon the continuing existence of favorable international circumstances, an expanding domestic consensus on security policy, and a robust economy and defense industrial base. Each of those assumptions is being challenged, to various degrees, by an international situation in flux, eroding public support for defense spending, and adverse budgetary trends.¹

The strong and widespread support that France has typically enjoyed for its foreign and defense policies can no longer be assumed. Indeed, the domestic challenge to those policies appears to be increasing dramatically and as a result, the portent of a significant reorientation of policy is becoming clear.

As President François Mitterrand enters his eleventh year in power, it has become obvious that France faces unexpected and unwanted changes abroad. Rather than relying on power to protect its place in the international arena, France must, as during the immediate postwar period, rely on the talents, skills and diplomatic prowess of its leader. With four years left until his final term in office expires, Mitterrand appears eager to make his mark in history as the man who eroded the Gaullist legacy of independence and

¹ Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "France," Draft paper for presentation at the conference on Force Mobilization, the Revolutions of 1989, and the Future of European Security, National Defense University, Washington, D.C., 19-21 June 1990, 1-2.

French nationalism and established a new European identity for his country, principally in the vanguard of the European community.²

During the De Gaulle era (1958-1969), France became the symbol of determined *raison d'état*, independence and grandeur, reluctant to embrace any supranational movement on the assumption that it would seriously compromise France's national identity. Yet, in the past decade, and particularly in the last three years, France has actively promoted itself as an ardent supporter of European initiatives. Mitterrand has functioned as the lead driver in a move to promote a more unified European political and economic identity to both enhance Europe's international leverage and, in particular, to counter growing German economic, and hence political, power.

The decisive French turn toward Europe has been reinforced by the 1989 democratic revolution in Eastern Europe, which is widely perceived as enhancing German power even more, and which has evidently destroyed any lingering French pretensions at politically dominating Europe. Indeed, the French could watch Chancellor Kohl's steadfast pursuit of a greater Germany with only a clear sense of helplessness and lack of direction.

Compounding the blow to common French assertions of France being a world class power, French budgetary difficulties are making at least some controversial defense cuts inevitable and there are even discussions in French defense circles that elements of the

² William Drozdiak, "Mitterrand, Kohl Stepping Up Pace Without Britain," The Washington Post, 3 November 1990, A14.

prestigious nuclear force de frappe may be allowed to become obsolete. Even the French are being forced to acknowledge that the political usefulness of nuclear weapons and hence the essence of France's claim to great power status, is diminishing along with East-West tensions.

Perhaps as a result of the pace of the profound changes in Europe, Mitterrand's reactions have seemed hesitant and uncertain. This has led some critics to portray him as a cynic, quick to abandon policies and principles.³ Perhaps a more accurate explanation, however, is simply that Mitterrand is still searching for France's proper role in a rapidly changing Europe.

With German reunification, France has been required to relinquish its special responsibilities in Germany as one of the four victorious powers of the Second World War. Chancellor Kohl took the lead, establishing firm control over the unification process, informing, rather than consulting the Allies of events that were occurring. Ignoring his critics' advice, Mitterrand has refused to issue declarations to the Germans. Instead, he has attempted to convince the Germans of the virtues of European unity.

Mitterrand's next task will be to convince his own nation. One Pulitzer journalist has repeatedly described De Gaulle as "a political psychiatrist, ministering to a nation that was to suffer traumas of defeat, betrayal and loss."⁴ In the next several years, Mitterrand will need to play the role of the political psychiatrist, ministering to a

³ Jim Hoagland, "Mitterrand in the Briar Patch," The Washington Post, 3 May 1990, A25.

⁴ Jim Hoagland, "France: Le Jour De Gloire Est Passe," The Washington Post, 22 July 1990, C4.

nation suffering from reduced national influence, independence and military power. The Gaullist vision of France as a nation destined to glory as a result of its leading role in world affairs is rapidly fading as Europe, indeed the world, centers its attention on Germany and the democratization of Eastern Europe.

Unfortunately, precisely at the time when strong leadership and direction are most needed, Mitterrand has been unable to provide a clear vision of where and how France will fit into the new order. The central problem appears to lie in an uncertainty of the French government in knowing exactly what it wants. President De Gaulle accurately prophesied in 1965 the conditions that would have to exist for German reunification to occur; however, he could not have predicted the benign role France would play were this to happen:

Assuredly, the success of so vast and difficult an enterprise (German unification) implies many conditions. Russia must evolve in such a way as no longer to conceive its future in totalitarian constraint imposed at home and abroad, but in progress accomplished in common by men and free peoples. Its satellites must play their role in a renewed Europe. It must be recognized, above all, by Germany, that the settlement of which would be the object would necessarily include its frontiers and armaments in agreement with all its neighbors, East and West. The six states that, let us hope, are in the process of establishing the West European economic community must succeed in organizing themselves in the political and defense domain in order to make possible a new equilibrium of our continent. Europe, the mother of modern civilization, must be established from the Atlantic to the Urals in concord and cooperation to develop its immense resources and to play, together with its daughter, America, the appropriate role in the progress of two billion people who badly need it. What a role Germany could

play in this worldwide ambition of the rejuvenated Old Continent!⁵

The French were not prepared for the magnitude of the changes that German reunification and the end of the postwar division of Europe would have on international security arrangements. Because European security in the postwar period has depended on the partition of Germany and Europe, developments since 1989 have had profound effects on all European nations' security policies, but particularly that of France. French security policy has critically depended on the super structures of the Cold War - Germany laden with U.S. troops and nuclear and conventional weapons and the U.S. nuclear guarantee to Europe.

However, U.S. troops and weapons have begun to leave Germany, with large-scale withdrawals imminent. The future role and structure of NATO are clearly uncertain and, as a corollary, so are the ties between the U.S. and Europe. The future of the Soviet Union is perhaps the least predicable dimension of the new European political landscape; East and West have solemnly agreed that the Cold War is over, but Moscow's huge military might remains largely intact, to pose at least a potential danger.

Finally, the war in the Persian Gulf has allowed many questions concerning Germany's new role in the international arena, and particularly the European arena, to surface. After widespread fears surfaced shortly after reunification over possible rising German militarism, Germany's "benign" response to the Gulf War prompted fears concerning Germany's commitment to NATO, the European

⁵ Steven Philip Kramer, "France Faces the New Europe," Current History, November 1990, 365.

Community (EC) and other European and Western institutions. The French are becoming increasingly concerned over what appears to be a German preference for denuclearization and neutrality - an occurrence which would level a certain blow to the premise of French security policy.

This thesis examines each of these areas with a view toward defining how recent events have shaken the foundations of French security policy, demanding the revision of its fundamental tenets. The areas examined include the following:

- 1) A review of French security policy since the Second World War and the pervasive impact of De Gaulle's legacy;
- 2) The effects of Gorbachev's "new thinking" and the relative decline of Soviet power on French security policy;
- 3) The impact of German reunification and the end of the post-war division of Europe on French economic and security policies; and
- 4) The implications of French cooperation with its Western Allies in the recent Gulf War.

Finally, this thesis concludes with an estimation of the direction French security policy appears to be headed - a continuation of the current course, which is becoming increasingly unsustainable, or an acknowledgement that France's security is dependent upon greater cooperation with NATO and her European allies.

II. FRENCH SECURITY POLICY SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A. BACKGROUND

In 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon, France was still considered a Great Power. The label did not change even long after the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, although for the first time in her history, she has become greatly dependent on her allies for security. France gained her main objective in World War I, the reacquisition of Alsace-Lorraine, but for the price of 1.4 million dead or over 10 per cent of the male population.⁶ Again, French status as a Great Power remained intact.

When the French surrendered to the German military invasion in 1940, it was widely agreed that France would never again be a Great Power. This was a conclusion vehemently opposed by the Resistance and General Charles de Gaulle's Free French Movement. De Gaulle's 18 June 1940 broadcast from London, announcing the founding of the Free French Resistance and declaring that France had lost a battle, but not the war, is an event characterized by great festivity in Paris each year. The following is an apt interpretation of the significance of this event to the French nation:

This broadcast was the beginning of de Gaulle's long career as a political psychiatrist, ministering to a nation that was to suffer traumas of defeat, betrayal and loss. From June 18, 1940 until his death in 1969, de Gaulle fashioned a political identity for the

⁶ David S. Yost. "The French Way of War," Essay presented at the Conference of the International Studies Association, Philadelphia, 18-21 March 1981, 5.

French that they donned and wore like a winter greatcoat against the harsh winds of history.⁷

France's popular self-perception as a Great Power is owed largely to De Gaulle's convincing arguments. He insisted that France had not lost the Second World War but had won it as much as had the Russians, British and Americans. Hence, he insisted France was to be accorded all the perquisites due the other Great Powers, most notably, an occupation zone in Germany and Berlin. It followed that France would share in the responsibility for the ultimate disposition of the German question, and would take a seat on the United Nations Security Council. To underscore France's proper rank, De Gaulle accelerated the country's nuclear weapons program and embarked on a much more autonomous role for France in both the European arena and NATO. De Gaulle acknowledged in 1961: "France proposes to recover the exercise of its full sovereignty - it is intolerable for a great state that its destiny be left to the decisions and actions of another state."⁸

De Gaulle believed that the only way to recover full sovereignty and credibly protect the national "sanctuary" was by having and controlling strategic nuclear weapons as the basis of the nation's deterrence doctrine. The concept of "two battles" was formulated and outlined by De Gaulle as early as 1963. It would entail a "forward battle" in West Germany in which French conventional forces might play a reserve role for Allied forces, if it

⁷ Jim Hoagland, "Revive la France!" The Washington Post National Weekly Edition, 30 July-5 August 1990, 24.

⁸ De Gaulle as cited in Yost, "The French Way of War," 8.

was deemed to be in French interests. But this role would be clearly subordinated to the second, decisive battle when French resolve to resort to her strategic nuclear arsenal, if necessary, would be made clear to the enemy.⁹ This concept was articulated further in 1964 with the introduction of the idea of a nuclear "warning shot."¹⁰ The latter remains a part of French deterrence doctrine to the present time.

Since all of France's current strategic nuclear forces were planned during General de Gaulle's presidency, his strategic concepts have become the foundation of a doctrine he announced in 1964. It has since been refined, but remains largely in effect to the present time. De Gaulle announced:

In 1966, we will have enough Mirage IVs and tanker aircraft to be able to strike at once, at a distance of several thousand kilometers, with weapons whose total yield will surpass that of 150 Hiroshima bombs . . . The path of deterrence is henceforth open to us, for the act of attacking France would be equivalent for any aggressor to undergoing frightful destruction himself. Of course, the megatons that we could launch would not equal in number those that Americans and Russians are able to unleash. But, once reaching a certain nuclear capability and as far as one's own direct defense is concerned, the proportion of respective means has no absolute value. In fact, since a man and a country can die but once, deterrence exists as soon as one can mortally wound the potential aggressor and is fully resolved to do so, and he is well convinced of it.¹¹

⁹ David S. Yost, "France's Deterrent Posture and Security in Europe, Part I: Capabilities and Doctrine," Adelphi Papers No. 194 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1984), 5.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ De Gaulle as cited in David S. Yost, "French Nuclear Targeting," Strategic Nuclear Targeting, eds. Desmond Bell and Jeffrey Richelson (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 129.

1. The Fourquet Doctrine

In 1967, General Charles Ailleret, Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces, presented the doctrine of "Tous Azimuths" - an abstract concept for targeting French nuclear weapons in all directions of the horizon. A month before De Gaulle resigned in 1969, General Michel Fourquet, Ailleret's successor, presented a new military doctrine which clearly identified the Soviet Union as the potential enemy. This doctrine, which remains largely valid today, saw tactical nuclear weapons as useful for "testing" the adversary's intentions and demonstrating France's will to resist, and if necessary, escalate to strategic nuclear strikes.¹² Fourquet's "two battles" doctrine saw "overlapping possibilities between potential combat in coordination with allies and the combat that would support France's national deterrent maneuver."¹³ Naturally, France's potential participation in this forward battle or any other would be subordinated to the requirements of the national deterrent maneuver.

According to Fourquet, France's participation in the "forward battle" would not take place in the framework of NATO's "flexible response". This would prove ineffective for deterrence and very costly in terms of conventional forces since the assets allocated for this mission would be incapable of conducting a defensive action of any lengthy duration. Fourquet believed what would most likely occur would be an autonomous air-ground offensive engagement of

¹² David S. Yost, "France and Conventional Defense in Central Europe," The EAI Papers, No. 7, Spring 1984, 9.

¹³ *ibid.*

French forces forward but in close proximity to the borders and centered on the use of tactical nuclear weapons in a massive, single-salvo strike against an enemy who had broken through NATO's forward defenses.¹⁴ Although the concept of the two battles was never explicitly formulated, nor officially sanctioned, the ambiguous wording of the French White Paper on Defense published in 1972 made apparent the concept of the "independent deterrent maneuver" - independent from the forward battle that would be fought by the NATO allies.

2. Withdrawal from NATO's Integrated Military Structure

France's withdrawal from the NATO integrated military structure was the natural corollary to such premises. After De Gaulle's return to power in 1958 and the establishment of the Fifth Republic, De Gaulle's views of a "European Europe" became evident. Four basic themes were apparent: a Europe of independent states with no supranational authority; a Europe independent of the United States; a Europe in which France is the dominant power in terms of foreign policy; and a Europe open to the East.¹⁵ Collectively, this would be De Gaulle's ideal of a "European Europe" or a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" which included the Soviet Union but not the U.S.

¹⁴ Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "Between the Rhine and the Elbe: France and the Conventional Defense of Central Europe," Current News, No. 1695, 2 March 1988, 474.

¹⁵ Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, "General de Gaulle's Europe and Jean Monnet's Europe," in The New International Actors: The U.N. and the E.E.C., eds. Carol Ann Cosgrove and Kenneth J. Twitchett (London: Macmillan, 1970), 191.

De Gaulle was greatly suspicious of offers of assistance to French security from any other nation, but particularly from the United States. He often claimed that France had not received the allied assistance it desperately needed in the initial stages of both world wars and therefore was quickly invaded by Germany. Those feelings of vulnerability were heightened in 1956 when the United States refused to aid France in the Suez crisis. Moreover, France criticized as inadequate the support it had received in the war in Indo-China and at the battle of Dien-Bien-Phu, and in the Algerian War of Independence between 1954 and 1962. Lastly, some authors have cited De Gaulle and Roosevelt's dislike for each other as perhaps the root of De Gaulle's "notorious anti-Americanism".¹⁶

In 1966, De Gaulle announced France's pursuit of independence through the possession of strategic nuclear forces capable of deterring any threat to her vital interests. He believed France's independence would be complete if withdrawal from an entangling NATO structure made her obligations to her allies less automatic.¹⁷ However, after withdrawal, France could continue to benefit from the U.S. strategic nuclear umbrella and NATO's efforts to deter the Soviets and neutralize German power.

A related issue was also cited by De Gaulle as a reason for France's withdrawal. De Gaulle firmly disagreed with the U.S. doctrine of flexible response and cited it as likely to undermine the credibility of the U.S. strategic nuclear guarantee. His rationale was

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 190.

¹⁷ Yost, "France's Deterrent Posture," 5.

twofold. First, he maintained that the essence of credibility was the threat of massive and immediate nuclear retaliation - not gradual escalation. Next, De Gaulle believed a doctrine of flexible response would tempt the superpowers to limit any hostilities to the European homeland while keeping their own as "sanctuaries" - areas free from nuclear strikes. He also feared the United States would most likely postpone any nuclear employment until Europe had been devastated by conventional warfare, when perhaps an earlier use of nuclear weapons might have prevented war altogether.

One final aspect of De Gaulle's strategy was the removal of all significant Allied installations from French territory. This allowed France to maximize her independence by choosing to engage in an option of non-belligerency in any conflict she deemed contrary to her interests. Thus began the basis of the deterrence doctrine that remains in effect to the present: strategic nuclear forces can only credibly protect the national "sanctuary" of the government controlling them.

3. The Non-belligerency Option and French Cooperation with NATO

Many political and military authorities for years have asserted that if NATO were attacked by the Warsaw Pact, the French would certainly and immediately join NATO forces in defense of Western Europe. However, any automatic commitment of French forces to NATO or, even more so, any automatic subordination of French forces to NATO command in times of war, has been clearly and repeatedly rejected by the French since their withdrawal from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966. Their declared option

of non-belligerency was adopted to keep French forces that remain essentially dedicated to the execution of the national deterrent maneuver firmly in the control of the French President.

General Jeannou Lacaze, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, explained France's cooperation policy with NATO in September 1981:

In order to preserve the government's liberty of action and to safeguard French interests in the Alliance, the cooperation policy will continue to repose on the three following principles:

- cooperation only involves conventional forces, and therefore excludes all nuclear force employment planning;
- no automatic commitment of French forces, which excludes in particular France receiving any peacetime responsibility for ground, sea or air zones and participating in what is called the 'forward battle';
- in the case of a commitment at NATO's side, French forces will remain grouped under national command and in directions or zones covering national territory.¹⁸

Inherent in these principles are two other French positions: no significant allied units or operational bases are allowed on French soil; and no automatic NATO access to French air space, logistic and other infrastructure assets, such as airfields, ports, railways, petroleum pipelines, communications and transportation installations. In 1967, General Lyman Lemnitzer, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, judged the loss of French territory and airspace as more disadvantageous to the Alliance than the loss of French forces.¹⁹

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 10.

¹⁹ Lemnitzer as cited in Yost, "France and Conventional Defense in Central Europe," 59.

The degree of French adherence to the above principles has become less evident since De Gaulle's presidential term. Under both former French President Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterrand, the trend has been toward greater likelihood of French participation in any European conflict. The attempt has been to réaffirm France's commitments to her allies, while not exactly withdrawing the option of non-belligerence. Seemingly, any attempt at even the slightest reintegration into NATO or perceived abandonment of France's non-belligerency option would be interpreted as betraying the Gaullist legacy.

B. STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES

De Gaulle argued on numerous occasions that no foreign policy can be genuinely independent unless supported by appropriate military strength.²⁰ In 1975, Giscard d'Estaing reaffirmed De Gaulle's ambitions by claiming, "France is and must remain the third nuclear power in the world and it goes without saying that we reject any idea of a ceiling on the French nuclear force."²¹

French strategists stress the value of the concept of "proportional deterrence," a concept whose meaning appears to be kept deliberately vague and imprecise in order to enable a surprise reaction.²² According to De Gaulle's definition of this concept, a more powerful adversary can be deterred effectively, nuclear as well as

²⁰ David S. Yost, "French Defense Budgeting: Executive Dominance and Resource Constraints," *Orbis*, Fall 1979, 579.

²¹ Giscard d'Estaing as cited in Yost, "French Defense Budgeting," 584..

²² For a review of various definitions of this concept see Yost, "France's Deterrent Posture," 15.

conventional, by the sheer disproportion between the damage he might suffer from nuclear retaliation, compared with the potential gains he can hope to achieve by attacking the smaller nuclear country.²³ Thus, in the French view, this doctrine lends credibility to their relatively small, independent nuclear force by rendering war as an unacceptable and pointless exercise.

The French deterrence concept is founded on the need for a strictly "sufficient" nuclear arsenal. Deterrence for the French means not winning wars but preventing them. Mitterrand described it as, "keeping forces in a state of 'sufficiency' - in terms of quantity, quality, performance - so as to be capable of inflicting damage on the aggressor that would be at least equivalent to what he would stand to gain."²⁴

The nuclear employment scenario would begin with the release of "pre-strategic" forces (previously termed "tactical weapons"), which are not intended to function as an extension of conventional weapons. They are delivered in a single strike and have enormous significance because they are considered the final "warning shot" before the strategic nuclear offensive begins. The balance between the nuclear and conventional forces is vital: conventional, pre-strategic nuclear and strategic nuclear forces all support and guarantee the security of one another.²⁵ Despite

²³ Robert E. Osgood and Henning Wegener, "Deterrence: The Western Approach," Based on a study conducted by the Secretary General of the United Nations, April 1985 - March 1986, 7.

²⁴ Speech of M. François Mitterrand, "France's Defence," drafted at the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies, 11 October 1988, as cited in Speeches and Statements, Sp. St/LON/98/88.

²⁵ Carol Reed, "Peace through deterrence - The French Armed Forces," Defence No. 2/1990, 110.

changes in leadership, French officials have consistently upheld the legitimacy of nuclear deterrence as the means of preventing war in France. Nuclear weapons are further viewed as the key to maintaining France's rank, independence and international status. Not surprising then, France stands out as the Western country with the strongest public consensus in support of nuclear deterrence.²⁶

C. FRENCH CONVENTIONAL FORCES

French conventional forces were designed for the purpose of fighting one basic contingency: a short intense conflict, probably in conjunction with tactical (pre-strategic) nuclear strikes.²⁷ As a result, nuclear forces were emphasized and given budget priority at the expense of conventional forces from 1960 until 1976 when Giscard d'Estaing requested several significant adjustments and modifications to priorities. Prior to 1976, delays, cutbacks, cancellations, and enormous cost-overruns were normal patterns in conventional equipment procurement. After the 1976 emphasis on conventional capabilities, the conventional forces were generally considered better prepared for their mission. However, preliminary results of French studies conducted on the performance of the French troops in the Persian Gulf war indicate that the troops were ill-

²⁶ David S. Yost, "The Delegitimization of Nuclear Deterrence," draft paper, (photocopy), April 1990, 6.

²⁷ Yost, "France and Conventional Defense," 28.

prepared for war as a result of inadequate hardware, logistics, intelligence, and training.²⁸

A major result of a reorganization of the army in 1983 was the establishment of a new army command in the form of a highly specialized military unit, the Force d'Action Rapide (FAR). The FAR is a 53,000 men command oriented primarily towards rapid intervention in Central Europe, as the forward echelon of the First French Army, and overseas. Participation in the territorial defense of France is a secondary mission. The creation of the FAR has been viewed as evidence of recent French willingness to diversify military options for responding to a central European contingency by developing a more varied and capable conventional force.²⁹ The creation of the FAR and a pledge by the French President to consult with the German Chancellor prior to the employment of French pre-strategic nuclear weapons on German territory, time and circumstances permitting, are visible manifestations of diplomatic initiatives made in an effort to enhance France's national security and status within the Alliance.³⁰ This move clearly indicates a trend toward increased involvement in the common defense of Western Europe, mainly defense of Germany, and the need for, and move toward, a more active French role in NATO.

²⁸ Alan Riding, "France Concedes Its Faults In War," The New York Times, 8 May 1991, A7; Andrew Borowiec, "France Shocked Into Revamping Its Armed Forces," Washington Times, 30 April 1991, 8.

²⁹ Yost, "The French Way of War," 9.

³⁰ Palmer, "Between the Rhine and the Elbe," 473.

Initial reports of the FAR's performance in the recent Gulf War have fueled further speculation that the force may increase its participation in allied training exercises. France was able to send only one third of the FAR to Saudi Arabia and initial reports indicate that the unit experienced problems coordinating with other allied forces.³¹ This has led some observers to speculate that now France will most likely seek closer ties to the Alliance.³²

D. FRENCH SECURITY POLICY IN THE 1990'S

The events of 1989 proved to be a turning point in history of a magnitude that could not have been anticipated. In 1979, one author correctly predicted the upset of long-standing French assumptions that events in Europe have caused: "Only the reunification of Germany, whether neutralized or not, could in the short term shake the (current) feeling of continental security (that the French enjoy)."³³ Not only do the French have to contend with the reunification of Germany, but they must also come to terms with the collapse of Communist authority in Eastern Europe, the prospective withdrawal of Soviet forces from the region, and the imminent large-scale reductions in the U.S. military and nuclear presence in Europe. Faced in addition, are unprecedented pressures to reduce defense spending, to participate more fully in arms control initiatives, to review their nuclear doctrine and strategic force employment, and

³¹ Borowiec, "France Shocked Into Revamping," 9.

³² *ibid.*

³³ Yost, "The French Way of War," 9.

now unexpectedly, to review the adequacy of their conventional forces. Discussions in French defense circles of late indicate nearly everything is shrouded in uncertainty.

1. The Impact of Recent Events in Europe

Many authorities see the security question in Europe as inherently dependent on the long-term effects of German unity. Many further this idea by claiming that the future of NATO, the European Community, and the Western European Union are mainly dependent on what Germany desires and that France's influence in these areas is decreasing proportionally as Germany's influence increases. The official French view has always been one of clear support for German reunification with Germany entitled to self-determination and full sovereignty. However, this view is clarified in that a united Germany's defense must not be secured to the detriment of other European countries. The French believe that the legitimate interests of all the other countries involved, including the Soviet Union, must be taken into account.³⁴ It is quite clear, however, that France's response to German reunification is an attempt to contain the ever-growing German power, and speed up the implementation of the European economic, monetary and political union, within the framework of the EC, in order to ensure Germany remains firmly tied to Europe.

German reunification has created other problems for France as well. The bulk of the pre-strategic forces, which would be

³⁴ Speech of M. Roland Dumas, Ministre D'Etat, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, before the Senate, 27 June 1990, as cited in Speeches and Statements, Sp.St/LON/92/90.

used to provide the final warning of France's will to implement a major nuclear strike on the aggressor, consist of 32 Pluton SSM launchers. This system is scheduled for replacement by the Hades SSM in 1992. The Hades is a semi-ballistic missile with greater flexibility and improved firing rate, accuracy, and range (from 120 km for Pluton to nearly 500 km).³⁵

However, the popularity of the Hades appears to be in fast decline. The missile is clearly unable to reach the Soviet Union, and the Germans, on whose eastern territory the missile would most likely fall, have become more and more vocal in urging its abandonment. Moreover, in conjunction with arms control negotiations, NATO's decision not to replace the Lance and to phase out all nuclear artillery has further increased pressure to stop the weapon's development.

The French, on the other hand, cite several reasons for remaining committed to its deployment. Conceivably it would give the President greater flexibility in his choice of nuclear options for the final warning shot.³⁶ It could also become an ideal bargaining chip in a new round of disarmament negotiations. However, many French officials simply argue that, as a weapon of deterrence, the Hades enhances the overall stability and security of Europe. This line of reasoning was argued by the former Minister of Defense, Jean-Pierre Chevènement: "Our weapons are not made to be used; they

³⁵ Reed, "Peace through deterrence," 111.

³⁶ Jolyon Howorth, "France since the Berlin Wall: defense and diplomacy," The World Today, vol. 46 No. 7, July 1990, 127.

are deterrent weapons, they give credibility to deterrence which is the only concept that is not just in France's but also in Europe's interest: our goal is not to win a war but, as François Mitterrand has said, to prevent it."³⁷

France's reluctance to abandon any weapons development or modernization programs is a symptom of larger French uncertainties concerning the situation in Europe. Chevènement denounced the "complacent optimism" of those who believe that disarmament initiatives will stabilize the East-West relationship: "The position of France in Europe will depend, now more than ever, on its independent defense posture."³⁸ According to Chevènement, the Soviet Union will remain the only military superpower in Europe for at least the foreseeable future.³⁹ French officials believe that the military presence of the U.S. in Europe will most likely dramatically decrease, adding to the current instability in Europe. Faced with German reunification, U.S. force reductions in Europe, and an unstable European political and economic situation in general, the French feel they cannot afford to lose any of their military capability, lest they lose their rank, independence, and security.⁴⁰

³⁷ Interview with M. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, former French Minister of Defence, published in Der Spiegel, 8 March 1990, as cited in Speeches and Statements, Sp.St/LON/49/90.

³⁸ Chevènement as cited in Alexandra Schwartzbrod, "Ebbing Eastern Threat Gnaws at France's 'Independent Defense' Stance," Armed Forces Journal International, June 1990, 30.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

Furthermore, although the East is viewed as a continuing threat, at least in the foreseeable future, it is not the sole threat. Outside Europe some Frenchmen see powers emerging that "perhaps will not exercise prudence which flows from historical experience."⁴¹ Indeed, there is a growing perception in France that "the threat" now comes from the South rather than the East. An opinion poll in May 1989 revealed that only 20 per cent of the respondents felt the Soviet Union was a threat, whereas 37 per cent believed the threat to be Iran and 39 per cent the Arab World in general.⁴² As a result, a new defense doctrine currently being drafted by the French Ministry of Defense, in essence calls for a return to the "Tous Azimuths" Doctrine - the all-directional defense policy.⁴³ Not only will this policy contend with worldwide threats, as opposed to threats simply from the East, but is also perhaps seen as the best way to justify France's rising defense budget.

2. Defense Spending in the 1990's

While the United States, Britain and Germany cut their defense spending, France was the only major power to increase its defense expenditure in 1990 - an increase of 3.8 per cent over the previous year.⁴⁴ Moreover, the government maintained full spending on France's nuclear programs in 1990, allocating 23 percent

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² Howorth, "France since the Berlin Wall," 128 and 130.

⁴³ Schwartzbrod, "Ebbing Eastern Threat," 30.

⁴⁴ "A pivotal power in Europe," Jane's Defense Weekly, 23 June 1990, 1246.

of its total defense budget to the Force de Frappe, while cutting spending on many conventional arms systems.⁴⁵ Although there had been some pressure within the government for defense cuts, it was only in 1991 that the French government, for the first time in recent history, faced serious domestic pressure to cut the 1991-92 military budget in response to the changing world situation and the increasing inability of France to fund the missions of its formidable military might lest it risk compromising the health of its economy.

There are also strong indications, as reflected in recent public-opinion polls, that the traditional domestic consensus on military spending priorities and defense issues is beginning to break up. Indeed, the debate has centered on such political issues as France's status as one of Western Europe's strongest military powers and its complex relationship with Germany.⁴⁶ In the words of one author, France must begin to reconcile the "political and diplomatic costs of conducting a highly visible foreign policy at a time of growing discrepancy between means and aims, speeches and reality, the nation's ambitions and the nation's wealth."⁴⁷

Indicative of this debate, France is said to be moving toward abandoning upgrades to one of the three branches of its nuclear strike force. The leg of the triad that would be neglected is the 18 land-based ballistic missiles located in southeast France on

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Alan Riding, "The French Seek Their Own 'Peace Dividend'," The New York Times, 15 July 1990, 5.

⁴⁷ Dominique Moisi, "French Foreign Policy: The Challenge of Adaptation," Foreign Affairs, Fall 1988, 152.

the Plateau d' Albion.⁴⁸ The missiles, which were slated for replacement by the S-4 system, will evidently be allowed to become obsolete over the next five to ten years. The move would free an estimated 33 billion francs for modernizing the French nuclear submarine fleet and developing the long-range air-launched nuclear missile (ASLP), indicating France will rely mainly on submarines and aircraft in the future.⁴⁹

Overall, the government's response to the debate over defense spending priorities has been a reorganization of priorities and some minor conventional arms cuts. In reality, this amounts to a slow-down in the growth rate of expenditure and a trimming or spreading out of procurement programs, rather than cutting them. Recently France has only reluctantly begun discussions to cut military personnel as well, in contrast to the eagerness of other European governments and the U.S. to do so. The "Armées 2000" reorganization plan, unveiled in June 1989 by Chevènement, will, however, save declining defense resources by rationalizing command arrangements and consolidating missions and functions on a joint services basis, when possible.⁵⁰

3. French Participation in Arms Control

A closely related issue concerns French participation in arms control negotiations. Under the Fifth Republic, the French have

⁴⁸ "France Might Abandon One of Its Nuclear Arms," The Wall Street Journal, 16 October 1990, A23.

⁴⁹ "French may wind down S-3 missiles," Jane's Defence Weekly, 27 October 1990, 793.

⁵⁰ Palmer, "France," 8.

viewed arms control with suspicion; a matter solely construed by the superpowers as a means of preserving their own status and power in view of the emergence of other independent nuclear powers. This suspicion has persisted to the present and can be seen in the French argument that, while there may be a conventional European balance, there is not a nuclear one - a statement obviously inspired by the French desire to avoid limitations and controls over their own nuclear deterrent.⁵¹

The French recall four essential elements that must be met before their participation in arms control negotiations will occur: 1) asymmetric reductions of the superpower strategic arsenals that will result in a quantitative balance or parity; 2) stability which will guarantee that this new configuration of forces renders it impossible to launch surprise attacks or major offensives; 3) sufficiency in terms of the impossibility of one state to possess more than a specific percentage of the armed forces in Europe; and 4) transparency which will be secured by an information and verification system, confidence-building measures and other initiatives.⁵² Several years ago, the fulfillment of these conditions appeared near-impossible, however, today they appear somewhat less contentious.

Prior to 1978, France's "empty chair" policy concerning arms control was clearly inhibiting its opportunity to shape East-

⁵¹ Pierre Hassner, "The View from Paris," in Eroding Empire - Western Relations with Eastern Europe, ed. Lincoln Gordon (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987), 223.

⁵² Among other sources see the Speech of M. Roland Dumas, Ministre d'Etat, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, before the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies, 6 February 1990, as cited in Speeches and Statements, Sp.St/LON/32/90.

West relations and the resulting force postures.⁵³ Further isolation from arms control negotiations was even being viewed as disadvantageous and risky. Thus, in 1978 President Giscard d'Estaing made several proposals at the United Nations which clarified the fact that the French leadership had decided to become involved, and hence influence, the arms control process in a manner deemed constructive for long-term French security interests.⁵⁴

4. Bilateral and Multilateral Defense Cooperation

The rationale behind scrapping the "empty chair" policy also produced incentives to pursue bilateral and multilateral approaches to West European defense cooperation. This was recently reinforced by developments that could erode the essential conditions of France's security policy - credible U.S. nuclear guarantees to Europe; and Germany, solidly anchored to NATO and the EC. Since the Fifth Republic, France has had a preference for multiple bilateralism over multilateralism, mainly because bilateral relations are more conducive to flexibility and a chance for France to play the leading role, whereas multilateral ones tend to reinforce bloc solidarity and possible U.S. hegemony. In the future, France will, most likely, increase its pursuit of bilateral and multilateral defense cooperations efforts with emphasis on the first.

The most encouraging of France's bilateral defense cooperation efforts have concerned Germany. The achievements in

⁵³ For a discussion of France's "empty chair" policy see Yost, "France's Deterrent Posture, Part II," 35.

⁵⁴ David S. Yost, "French Security Policy at a Crossroads," draft manuscript, December 1989, 22.

Franco-German cooperation since the mid 1980's include improved French capabilities for potential participation in the forward battle such as the creation of the FAR and a revamped program of exercises, an unprecedented pledge by Mitterrand to consult the Chancellor prior to employment of the French pre-strategic weapons, the creation of a Defense and Security Council, and the establishment of a combined motorized infantry brigade.⁵⁵ In spite of these accomplishments, the French are becoming increasingly concerned about the long-term prospects for Franco-German cooperation given the increase in anti-nuclear sentiment in West Germany. This concern has led to public pledges that were previously unthinkable: "If West Germany became the victim of aggression, the engagement of France would be immediate and without reserve," Prime Minister Jacques Chirac announced in January 1988.⁵⁶

In the past several years, defense cooperation efforts with Britain have been equally encouraging. Of paramount importance was a French agreement to activate the British line of communication across northern France in peacetime for purposes of exercising the movement of Germany-bound reinforcements and supplies.⁵⁷ Cooperation has not only included logistics and reinforcement planning but has recently expanded to include air defense and out-of-area operations. Combined training between British and French air forces and tanker aircraft exchanges are other

⁵⁵ Palmer, "France," 25.

⁵⁶ Harry Anderson, "The New French Connection," Newsweek, 1 February 1988, 34.

⁵⁷ Palmer, "France," 32.

new dimensions. However, this expansion in conventional defense cooperation has not been matched to date by comparable progress in the nuclear arena, although an extensive amount of bilateral consultation on the subject is occurring. Both countries have acknowledged that significant areas of overlap in their nuclear doctrines exist.⁵⁸ The changing European situation combined with the decreasing availability of defense expenditures may soon make nuclear cooperation between the two countries mandatory. Recent agreements allowing for reciprocal port visits by their respective nuclear ballistic missile submarines and interconnection of the Syracuse 2 and Skynet 4 satellite communications networks are a good beginning.⁵⁹

Bilateral cooperation with the United States has been a slow but steady progression, indicative of France's increasingly pragmatic approach to military relations with the U.S. and NATO. The most visible progress has been in the field of maritime operations. Other progress has been in the areas of training and logistics.⁶⁰

E. CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

In view of the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the corresponding reorientation of the role of NATO, France has been under increasing pressure to review its nuclear doctrine to bring it

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 40.

more in line with NATO's; this would eliminate a major blockade in the road to France's return to NATO's integrated military structure. However, although the French have been participating to a much greater extent than is commonly known, particularly in the realm of bilateral and multilateral exercises, any foreseeable return to NATO's integrated military structure is not very likely. Additionally, as long as NATO retains its present command structure, France will view it as a U.S.-dominated framework limiting the freedom of action of its members, and France will maintain its essentially anti-reintegration stance.

Though official language retains the declaration of France's membership in such a structure as inconsistent with its independence and autonomy of action, France has ceased to play Europe against the alliance and has accepted NATO's indispensability to German security. Indeed, France has been one of NATO's most outspoken proponents since the collapse of the communist governments in Eastern Europe mainly because it views NATO as the necessary framework for keeping the U.S. firmly bound to Europe. French officials deem the commitment of the U.S. to the defense of Europe as indispensable against the ever-present military might of the Soviet Union. Although not publicly acknowledged, some officials view the U.S. presence in Europe as a natural counter-weight to the future military might of the now united Germany as well.

However, the French do not view a certain withdrawal of American troops from European soil as necessarily bad, since it could provide the opening for Europeans to take their own destiny in hand, an opportunity France has long sought. The ideal institutions for

European military and political cooperation in the French view would be the WEU and political union in the EC. To that end, France has played the leading role in both the revitalization of the WEU and the launching of an initiative for political union in the EC.

III. THE EFFECTS OF GLASNOST, PERESTROIKA, AND GORBACHEV'S "NEW POLITICAL THINKING" ON FRENCH SECURITY POLICY

In the relatively short period of time since Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Soviet Union, many of the long-standing tenets of Soviet security policy have been re-examined. More often than not, the new ideas being articulated are doctrinally and ideologically revolutionary and could potentially lead to the greatest changes ever undertaken in Soviet military policy. Indeed, glasnost, perestroika and this "new political thinking" on security served as the catalyst necessary to upset the balance of power inherent in the post-war international order.

When President Gorbachev repudiated the expansionist Brezhnev Doctrine and elevated the issues of disarmament and detente to a high position on the international agenda, no European country paid more attention than France. As the only other country on the European continent to possess and control its own nuclear weapons, France stands to lose much in terms of its perceived rank and independence if arms control negotiations strip it of any significant numbers of its nuclear armament. In fact, more so than any other country in the world, France has based her defense on the possession of a national nuclear armament, and therefore has come to view arms control as more of a threat than a hope.

It is not surprising then that France remains the least pro-Gorbachev country in Europe. Although not immune to Gorbachev's appeal, the French seem to have continued trust and a feeling of

security in the old Cold War order. Yet as a result of French skepticism of the permanence or long-term impact of Gorbachev's "new political thinking", France could stand to be cut off from any emerging detente or have little say in defining the structure of a new European security order.

The problem for France is how to reconcile its historical suspicion of arms control and disarmament with the desire to not disassociate or isolate itself from any newly emerging partnerships and lose any leverage it may have with allies, and, above all, compromise its own diplomatic or strategic independence. In the French view, if the Soviet Union breaks up, Russia will remain the single largest military power in Europe, a power that necessarily must be somehow balanced. How to balance this great, and possibly still unfriendly, military power and, equally important, how to prevent a Russian-German entente, is clearly a problem that is high on the French security agenda.

A. THE HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS

In the past one hundred years, two great forces have largely influenced French policy toward Russia, and then, the Soviet Union: the ideology of its regime; and its position as a candidate for continental hegemony. Even in the nineteenth century, before the communist revolution, the ideological element was present. One French observer, the Marquis de Custine, described Russia as a mysterious, closed, alien, and despotic society and a threat to the peace of Europe; as Custine put it, "the slave on his knees dreams of

world empire."⁶¹ Additionally, given the geographical situation, France is neither directly dominated nor directly threatened by the Soviet Union (there are no common borders, no conflicts of territory, nor are there any conflicts of minorities), but at least in modern history there has existed a diplomatic interest in not alienating Russia.

Between 1870 and 1945, French foreign policy vis-a-vis Russia was tied intimately to the German "problem." The three formal alliances between France and Russia (1893, 1935 and 1945) were all specifically directed against Germany. Since the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, France has not been strong enough to maintain her security alone. The French solution to this problem has historically been to develop a system of alliances for encircling and containing German military and economic power. Equally important in establishing an alliance system with Russia was the aim of precluding one from being formed between Russian and Germany - the ultimate danger for the French as evidenced by the Rapallo Pact of 1922 and the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939.

The reluctance of the French, particularly the French conservatives, to enter an alliance with the Soviet Union both in 1935 and 1945 was based mainly on ideological reasons. During the interwar period, the prevailing question was one of which to fear more - communism or nazism. Only after Hitler's abandonment of the League of Nations and his decision to rearm did the question

⁶¹ Pierre Hassner, "France and the Soviet Union," in Western Approaches to the Soviet Union, ed., Michael Mandelbaum (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988), 29.

appear to be decisively answered. After World War Two had ended and the heroism of the Red Army and the sufferings of the Russian people at the hands of the Germans produced a wave of sympathy over the French, this tempered the prevailing conflict between democracy and totalitarianism and paved the way for De Gaulle's 1945 alliance with the Soviets.

De Gaulle's objectives always aimed at the same final goal: the greatest possible independence for France as an independent European nation and in its relations with the two superpowers. During World War Two, De Gaulle threatened to move his headquarters to Moscow to increase his bargaining power with the U.S. and Britain. During his term in office from 1944-46, De Gaulle persistently sought a bilateral relationship with the Soviet Union claiming that France had common interests with the Soviet Union that it did not share with the allies - specifically De Gaulle's interest in Germany and his desire to divide it into several states and annex the Saarland for France. De Gaulle's disappointment in not being invited to Yalta led to his denouncing the "deliberate partition of Europe" as a superpower tactic to maintain control over the continent. This led to an even greater quest for independence and a push for De Gaulle's idea of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals".

In the mid-1960's, De Gaulle turned to the oldest strategy in the French repertoire. Approaching the Soviet Union, De Gaulle offered himself as a partner in detente against the American

"hegemon" and his West German "continental sword".⁶² Likewise, De Gaulle's "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" was being increasingly cited in French political circles. However, De Gaulle's vision of a Europe liberated from the domination of the superpowers was rudely shattered by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Gaullist hopes of the blocs giving way to a flexible diplomatic system were now condemned to failure.⁶³

The result of these and other incidents has led France since 1945 to distance itself from the common Western position, with respect to the Soviet Union, and adopt an independent Eastern position. A central objective of De Gaulle's "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" was to distance France from NATO, meanwhile reducing the American presence in Europe and inducing Russia to relax its rule and reduce its own presence in Eastern Europe; thereby opening the way for a reassertion of national autonomies and European influence, particularly French influence.⁶⁴ Ironically, history has now taken a new twist: other countries, most notably Germany and the United States have assumed this Gaullist path of detente and bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. Now it is France that is warily reminding its allies of the still-present Soviet threat, the corresponding necessity of maintaining a military balance, and of the danger of decoupling the United States from Europe.

⁶² Pierre Hassner, "The View from Paris," in Eroding Empire - Western Relations with Eastern Europe, ed., Lincoln Gordon (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1987), 145.

⁶³ Roger Morgan, West European Politics since 1945: The Shaping of the European Community (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1972), 161.

⁶⁴ Hassner, "France and the Soviet Union," 33.

B. FRENCH SECURITY POLICY PRIOR TO GORBACHEV'S "NEW POLITICAL THINKING"

In 1966, De Gaulle announced France's pursuit of an independent security policy based on strategic nuclear forces; this ideal has remained largely unchanged to the present. The French believe that the U.S. nuclear guarantee to Europe is unreliable and that only France's "proportional deterrent" can guarantee the security of France. "Proportional deterrence" protects France against Soviet aggression through the use of tactical nuclear warning shots at France's frontiers that will convince the Soviets of France's willingness to execute its counter-city threats.⁶⁵ Should the Soviets in return choose to strike France's air bases and IRBM's, then France would, almost certainly, strike Soviet cities with its surviving SLBM's and bombers. In effect, France's threat of nuclear retaliation alone can deter the Soviet Union from attacking France because the damage France could cause from targeting Soviet cities exceeds what the Soviets would stand to gain in conquering or destroying France. After 1980, French policy stressing the "anti-cities" approach was revised placing greater emphasis on destroying the infrastructure of the Soviet economy and administration.⁶⁶

Soviet opinions and evaluations of France as the potential adversary are largely unknown. Thus, the credibility of France's nuclear deterrent remains to date, uncertain. However, it is known

⁶⁵ Yost, "The French Way of War," 16.

⁶⁶ Yost, "France's Deterrent Posture, Part I, 15.

that the Soviet government does not view France's withdrawal from NATO's integrated military structure as removing France from the allied camp if hostilities broke out. The Soviets have repeatedly stressed that "France's political and military leadership does not rule out the possibility of using French forces within the NATO system," given the frequency of French participation in various NATO exercises, maneuvers, and planning and communication activities.⁶⁷ Therefore, it would be logical to assume that the Soviet government would most likely view the French as a belligerent in any East-West conflict.

C. GLASNOST, PERESTROIKA AND "NEW POLITICAL THINKING"

The catalyst for Mikhail Gorbachev's thorough restructuring, "perestroika", of all aspects of Soviet life - social, political, moral and economic, was the Soviet Union's deepening economic crisis and the gradual but severe erosion of the ideological and moral values of its citizens. Attempts to modify socialism in the Soviet Union are not without precedent, although the magnitude of Gorbachev's reforms are certainly new. Between World War Two and Gorbachev's appointment as President in March 1985, the Soviet Union saw four main phases of reform.⁶⁸ All four phases failed to produce any significant results.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 33.

⁶⁸ For a synopsis of these phases see Perestroika - And now for the hard part," The Economist, 28 April 1990, 9.

The purpose of perestroika is accelerated socio-economic development - to achieve the highest world levels of social productivity in the shortest possible time. Gorbachev calls perestroika an "urgent necessity" which arose as a result of processes of development in the Soviet socialist society.⁶⁹ In his book he describes perestroika as "the all-round intensification of the Soviet economy, the revival and development of the principles of democratic centralism in running the national economy, the universal introduction of economic methods, the renunciation of management by injunction and by administrative methods, and the overall encouragement of innovation and Socialist enterprise."⁷⁰

Equally important, the concept of "glasnost" (openness) "in all spheres of life is one of the most crucial conditions for the further promotion of perestroika processes, for making perestroika irreversible."⁷¹ Gorbachev cites the essence of perestroika as inherent in the fact that it unites socialism with democracy and glasnost is an indispensable condition for true democracy.⁷² Gorbachev sees glasnost as not only critical to the domestic scene, but also essential in the international arena as a promoter of peace and cooperation, and a means to conduct an "open" foreign policy.

⁶⁹ Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 1.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 21.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 289.

⁷² *ibid.*, 22 and 288.

Paramount to Gorbachev's program has been the immediate acceleration of scientific and technological progress in an attempt to narrow the scientific-technological gap between the Soviet Union and the advanced industrial nations. The purpose of accelerated advancement in the technological area is to stimulate economic growth, which would in turn, reverse the decrepit social and moral conditions of Soviet society and restore confidence in the badly decaying Communist Party.

The realization of Gorbachev's dream of perestroika will prove impossible without a major reallocation of resources from the military to the civilian sector of the economy. This meant halting the Soviet military build up of the 1990's. Thus came about the policy of "new political thinking". From Gorbachev's perspective, rebuilding the political, economic and social sectors of the Soviet Union were intimately tied to economic reform with significant implications for defense.⁷³

In his book Perestroika, Gorbachev advanced a fundamental change in ideology. He acknowledged that the 20th Party Congress in 1956 recognized war as no longer inevitable in the nuclear age and he extended the idea that the advent of nuclear weapons created a new kind of interest apart from class interests - "humankind interests" which transcends class struggle because it involves saving mankind from total destruction.⁷⁴ Traditionally, Marxist-Leninist

⁷³ Stephen M. Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security," International Security, Fall 1988, 129.

⁷⁴ William E. Odom, "Soviet Military Doctrine," Foreign Affairs, Winter 1988/89, 129.

thought viewed war as a positive phenomenon because war has often triggered revolutions. However, with the advent of nuclear weapons and the possibility of global nuclear conflict, world civilization would inevitably perish. Therefore, the Soviet Union must join with the imperialist states to eliminate the possibility of nuclear war. In Gorbachev's words, "The fundamental principle of the new political outlook is very simple: nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals."⁷⁵

By mid-1987, all the major tenets of Gorbachev's "new political thinking" had been articulated. They included:

- War prevention as the fundamental component of Soviet military doctrine;
- No war, nuclear as well as conventional, can be considered a rational continuation of politics;
 - Political means of enhancing security are more effective than military-technical means;
 - Security is indivisible: one nation's security cannot be enhanced by increasing other nations' insecurity;
 - 'reasonable sufficiency' should be the basis for the future development of combat capabilities vice military superiority;
 - Soviet military strategy should be based on 'defensive defense' (non-provocative), vice offensive capabilities and operations.⁷⁶

Of all the ideas inherent in the concept of "new political thinking", none has captured the attention of the world as much as the idea of "reasonable sufficiency". Gorbachev first raised this notion during the 27th Party Congress, when he said that the Soviet Union

⁷⁵ Gorbachev, Perestroika, 126.

⁷⁶ Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects," 133; and Gorbachev, Perestroika, 125-130.

would limit its nuclear potential to levels of reasonable sufficiency.⁷⁷ However, what constitutes reasonable sufficiency is a question that has yet to be decisively answered.

The French also define their deterrence doctrine in terms of reasonable sufficiency. They define reasonable sufficiency as the capacity of French strategic forces to inflict on the Soviets damage of such intensity so as to offset the advantage that the Soviets might gain by controlling France.⁷⁸ Soviet definitions of reasonable sufficiency appear to be something different.

Army General Dmitriy Yazov, USSR Minister of Defense, discussed reasonable sufficiency in an article entitled "Warsaw Treaty Military Doctrine." His definition is generally shared by the majority of Soviet officials:

When we speak about maintaining the armed forces, our military potential within the limits of reasonable sufficiency, we mean that at the present stage the essence of sufficiency for the strategic nuclear forces of the Soviet Union is determined by the need to prevent an unpunished nuclear attack in any, even the most unfavourable situation. As far as conventional weapons are concerned, sufficiency envisages an amount and quality of armed forces and armaments which would be enough to reliably ensure collective defence of the socialist community. The limits of sufficiency are determined not by us but by the actions of the United States and NATO. The Warsaw Treaty member states do not strive for military superiority and do not claim greater security than other countries but they will never agree to lesser security and will never tolerate military

⁷⁷ Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects," 144-145.

⁷⁸ Presentation by Dr. Jean-Francois Delpech, Director of the Center for Research and Evaluation of Strategies and Technologies, France, given at the New Alternatives Workshop, Defense Nuclear Agency, Nov 1989, K-2.

superiority over them. The existing military-strategic parity remains the decisive factor of preventing war.⁷⁹

Gorbachev introduced the concept of reasonable sufficiency as the basis of a purely defensive military doctrine. Although the Soviets have always maintained that their military doctrine was defensive, they acknowledged, however, that they would resort to offensive military force if the socialist world was ever threatened. However, the new concept of defensive defense is a significant departure from this idea. According to one Western interpreter, "Defensive defense connotes a force posture and military strategy sufficient to repel a conventional attack, but incapable of conducting a surprise attack with massive offensive operations against the territory of the other side."⁸⁰ Since conventional weapons normally represent the largest portion of a state's military spending, the combination of reasonable sufficiency and defensive defense provide an opportunity for significant reductions in the Soviet defense budget - precisely what Gorbachev needs - the release of resources from the military sector to the civilian sector.

The ultimate goal of Gorbachev's new political thinking is disarmament as demonstrated in his statement of 15 January 1986 calling for universal nuclear disarmament by the year 2000: "The Soviet Union calls upon all peoples and states, and, naturally, above all nuclear states, to support the programme of eliminating nuclear

⁷⁹ "Yazov writes on Pact Military Doctrine," FBIS-JPRS-UMA-88-005, Warsaw Pact, 10 March 1988, 25.

⁸⁰ Meyer, "The Sources and Prospects," 150.

weapons before the year 2000."⁸¹ Conventional weapons were cited as well: "In addition to eliminating weapons of mass destruction from the arsenals of states, the Soviet Union proposes that conventional weapons and armed forces become subject to agreed-upon reductions."⁸² The Soviet Union has cited its willingness to make unilateral reductions as proof of its commitment to the above objectives. They claim, for example, that today's Soviet Armed Forces have dropped in numerical strength by 265,000 persons, over 9,300 tanks, over 5,000 artillery systems, 835 combat aircraft and 40 combatant ships.⁸³ However, major ambiguity exists in terms of any redeployment or subsequent disposition of these assets - no promise has been made to destroy the equipment.⁸⁴

D. FRENCH POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION SINCE 1985

Throughout much of the 1980s, relations between France and the Soviet Union were characterized by mutual suspicion, sometimes even overt hostility. The USSR perceived France as "the leader of a gradually maturing effort by the members of the Western European Union (WEU) to create a collective West European defense capability

⁸¹ Statement by Mikhail Gorbachev, "Nuclear disarmament by the year 2000," The New York Times, 5 February 1986, A13.

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ "Military Science and Practice," FBIS-JPRS-UMT-90-004-L, Soviet Union, 21 May 1990, 18.

⁸⁴ Phillip A. Karber, "The Military Impact of the Gorbachev Reductions," Armed Forces Journal International, January 1989, 62.

within the overall framework of the Atlantic Alliance."⁸⁵ Conversely, France perceived the Soviets as attempting to decouple the U.S. from Europe, in terms of nuclear weapons and forces, drive a wedge in NATO, and ultimately eliminate the independent British and French nuclear forces. Therefore, it is not surprising to discover the skepticism with which Gorbachev's new political thinking has met in France.

With the arrival in power of Mitterrand in 1981, the special relationship between France and the Soviet Union began to deteriorate. Mitterrand became a prominent spokesman for the European "hard liners." After Gorbachev came to power in 1985, Mitterrand's attitude shifted and he began to advocate new, more positive developments in East-West relations. Contacts between Paris and the Kremlin became more frequent, but because Mitterrand would make no concessions on including the French nuclear forces in the arms control process, no significant progress in improving Franco-Soviet relations was possible.

The 1987 INF agreement was feared by the majority of French as a means for the superpowers to once again attempt to jointly control the world. An even greater fear was that in future negotiations, their own nuclear forces would be included. Former French Defense Minister Giraud referred to the entire proposal as a trap whose acceptance would mean a new Munich.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, "France," Draft paper for presentation at the conference on Force mobilization, the Revolutions of 1989, and the Future of European Security, National Defense University, Washington, D.C., 19-21 June 1990, 2.

⁸⁶ Hassner, "France and the Soviet Union," 41.

Toward the end of the 1980's, the French became less and less impervious to the enigmatic character and ideas of Gorbachev and soon began praising the prospects of superpower detente and disarmament as long as they were balanced reductions. Also during this time, Mitterrand became aware of the growing anti-nuclear and anti-American sentiments in Germany. Worsened by what he perceived to be the declining credibility of the U.S. commitment to Europe, Mitterrand also feared that Germany would lean toward neutralism and become more susceptible to Soviet domination. Thus came about the renewed French policies of anchoring Germany firmly in the West, by means of NATO and the EC, and encouraging Atlantic unity and the U.S. commitment to the defense of Europe.

The French view the continued commitment of the United States to European defense as remaining indispensable, at least in the near future, for serving as the counter-weight to the military power of the Soviet Union.⁸⁷ Paris perceives the substance of Soviet policy to remain relatively unchanged: it is still Soviet policy to create circumstances that will weaken West European-U.S. cooperation and commitments, and eventually lead to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe, leaving NATO essentially denuclearized. Furthermore, the French want the United States to remain the ultimate strategic guarantee against a very powerful Soviet Union that will emerge if perestroika succeeds in bringing about economic recovery. Lastly, France and Britain want to prevent the denuclearization of Europe

⁸⁷ David S. Yost, "Evolving French Attitudes on NATO and European Security," paper presented at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA., 18 July 1990, 4.

which would reduce Europe to a subordinate position with respect to the two superpowers.⁸⁸

Clearly, France is not wholly convinced of the irreversibility of the changes occurring in the Soviet Union. The French cite the fact that regardless of what the political future of Europe holds, the Soviet Union will remain a military superpower and certainly the dominant military power on the European continent. Furthermore, as former Defense Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement asked, "who knows whom it will serve in 10 or 20 years' time?"⁸⁹ Chevènement postulated that the European theater is becoming less stable as a result of the uncertain evolution of Eastern European countries and the emergence of internal nationality conflicts.⁹⁰ The corollary of Chevènement's argument is that "the position of France in Europe will depend, now more than ever, on its independent defense posture."⁹¹ The Prime Minister, Michel Rocard advanced a similar argument:

. . . in spite of his genius, Mr. Gorbachev will die one day, maybe under bad political circumstances. He will have a successor, and Soviet army marshals cannot be excluded. Soviet military power remains a problem as long as there is not a negotiated security system.⁹²

⁸⁸ Geoffrey Lee Williams, Coming in from the Cold: The Evolution of French Defence Policy (London: The Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, 1989), 41.

⁸⁹ Alexandra Schwartzbrod, "Ebbing Eastern Threat Gnaws at France's "Independent Defense" Stance," Armed Forces Journal International, June 1990, 30.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² "A Neighbor's View," Time, 2 April 1990, 31.

Moreover, the idea of a nuclear-free world by the year 2000, as put forth by Gorbachev in 1986, has been viewed by the French with grave skepticism and normally called an extravagant, unrealizable propaganda attempt. Some have claimed that Gorbachev's only reason for making such a statement was to gain the initiative in the superpower relationship by placing the West in a reactive position.⁹³ Many others have argued that the Soviets would be in favor of a denuclearized world because it would leave them with an overwhelming conventional military superiority. Whatever Gorbachev's reason for advancing the idea of a nuclear-free world, its attainment is viewed as highly unlikely for reasons identical to those of the French: without nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union would instantly lose its rank, status and independence as a global military power.

As a result of the Soviet Union's continued ability to pose a threat to NATO, the unpredictability of the internal turmoil in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and threats in the world other than those from the East, France is unlikely to seriously participate in arms control negotiations in the foreseeable future. The French view any attempt to cut nuclear weapons as a threat to their security and independence. Indicative of this was their reaction when the United States announced the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program. The French saw the U.S. desire to transcend the nuclear world as a threat to the credibility of the French national deterrent and to the validity

⁹³ Peter Frank, "Internal Constraints on Soviet Security Policy," paper presented at the Maritime Conference '90, "Decade of the '90s - Response to Change," Greenwich, U.K., Royal Naval Staff College, 14 February 1989, 10.

of France's claim to the status of a global power.⁹⁴ Moreover, the French view the Soviet acknowledgement of the impossibility of winning a nuclear war as the main reason that incites them to seek the denuclearization of Europe.⁹⁵ Therefore, the French see deterrence which relies solely on conventional means as clearly unable to guarantee peace; thus, nuclear deterrence must remain the cornerstone of security in the Western World.

Mitterrand's response to the uncertainties of the situation in Europe has been more rapid, persistent moves toward West European unity. Mitterrand sees the European Community's role as one of promoting economic development and political liberalization in the newly forming East European governments, and particularly useful in anchoring a united Germany firmly in the West. Mitterrand sees his goal of political unity in the European Community as consistent with the current emphasis on arms control and detente and a means for dealing with the unpredictability of Soviet power.

E. SOME PERSPECTIVES

The French solution to the uncertain future of the Soviet Union lies in the requirement for the West European nations to develop a common approach to their military security and in the continued U.S. nuclear commitment to Western Europe. For the French, this entails

⁹⁴ Among numerous sources on this subject see, Fredrik Wetterqvist, French Security and Defence Policy: Current Developments and Future Prospects (National Defence Research Institute, Department of Defence Analysis S 10254 Stockholm, 1990), 3; and Dominique Moisi, "French Foreign Policy: The Challenge of Adaptation," Foreign Affairs, Fall 1988, 154.

⁹⁵ Renouveau Defense, "Defense After Reykjavik: Initiatives to be taken by France," 20 January 1989, 15.

the creation of a "European pillar" of the Atlantic Alliance and the urgent necessity for the Alliance to adopt a new political posture in response to the situation created by the Soviet's "new political thinking". The French are particularly concerned that the increasingly benign perception of the USSR in Western Europe will fuel public opinion pressure to dismantle NATO, thereby decoupling the U.S. from Western Europe, and also making the construction of a West European political union within the European Community a difficult, if not impossible, enterprise.⁹⁶

France should continue to view the changing Soviet threat conservatively. The Soviet Union, currently destabilized as a result of the partial reforms that have taken place, is still a powerful military giant. Furthermore, the Soviets continue to engage in a concerted effort to develop numerous additional high-technology weapon programs that are key to force modernization. Therefore, because the outcome of the current turmoil in the Soviet Union is unpredictable, France should maintain its current military posture and continue its pursuit of the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. Arms control negotiations should support deterrence based on a negotiated and commonly defined sufficiency doctrine. Adequate Western military power has contributed to the forces of change in the Soviet Union - that power continues to be necessary in ensuring those forces of change move in the right direction.

⁹⁶ Palmer, "France," 4.

IV. THE IMPACT OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION AND THE END OF THE POSTWAR DIVISION OF EUROPE ON FRENCH ECONOMIC AND SECURITY POLICIES

The year 1989 saw the beginning of a process which in a year's time brought the reunification of Germany, the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the formal end of the Cold War. Yet because European security in the postwar period has depended on the partition of Germany and of Europe, these remarkable yet unexpected developments have had profound implications for West European, and particularly French, security policy.

Despite France's long-standing commitment in principle to German self-determination, rapid unification evoked considerable concern for several reasons. Initially there were fears that the East German government would simply collapse, leading to turmoil which perhaps would involve Soviet forces. Later emerged much stronger and more verbal fears stemming from the prospect of the recreation of a powerful German state in the heart of Europe. These fears revolve around two issues: the political and economic power of this new German state; and the role it is likely to play in a new European security structure.

A further issue of somewhat less importance to the French than the German problem, is the evolution of the Eastern European nations, and particularly, the Soviet Union. Although France is the least pro-Gorbachevian country in Europe and remains somewhat skeptical of the permanence of Gorbachev's "new political thinking,"

it now too considers the Soviet Union unable to reclaim its dominance in Eastern Europe without massive military intervention which is perceived as improbable, if not inconceivable. According to French policy-makers, regardless of its political future, the Soviet Union will remain the single largest military power in Europe, a power that necessarily must be cautiously balanced.

The French also believe that the European theater as a whole is becoming less stable as a result of the uncertain evolution of Eastern European countries and the emergence of internal nationality conflicts. The uncertainty of the future political situation in Eastern Europe, coupled with the still-present German question, is rapidly evolving into one of the most important debates in French political history - France's proper role in an undivided Europe.

A. FRENCH FEARS OF RISING GERMAN POWER

Two thousand years ago when German tribesmen ambushed three Roman legions advancing from the Rhine, the Roman historian Tacitus called the German's ferocious style of warfare the "furor Teutonicus" and wrote that, given to drinking and fighting, the Germans were tough, hardened warriors "fanatically loyal to their leaders" concluding, "Rest is unwelcome to the race."⁹⁷ This image has endured and even intensified as a result of the horrors of two world wars. Fear of the Germans, although perhaps in abeyance for the 40 years the continent was divided into a bipolar world, is on the

⁹⁷ Bruce W. Nelan, "Anything to Fear?" Time, 26 March 1990, 32.

rise again triggered by the realization that Europe's destiny is no longer controlled by the rival superpowers.

For obvious historical reasons, France appears the most concerned of the West European countries about how the newly reunified Germany will settle into its new role. This is justifiable also since France, more than any other country with the possible exception of Poland, stands to be the most affected by unification. Mitterrand, and German chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl, have had a close and cordial relationship for approximately nine years. This relationship is one of many French-German relations that have survived numerous changes in power in Paris and Bonn. In spite of this close association, recent French anxiety over German pre-occupation with unity and simultaneous German annoyance over French ambivalence or even hostility concerning the reunification, are causing increased French-German friction.

Many French officials are alarmed at the idea of the enormous economic potential and political influence of the united Germany in Europe and the even greater potential for German dominance of the European Community. Germany has been France's most important ally and its principal economic partner, accounting for some 40% of French trade.⁹⁸ There are fears that Germany has now acquired a significant advantage which will have a detrimental effect on France's own role, and change the existing balance of power in the EC. Opinion polls suggest that no one doubts that the former GDR, following a transition to a market economy, will be just as able to

⁹⁸ "A relationship in the balance," The Economist, 6 October 1990, 53.

bring about an economic miracle as the Federal Republic of Germany was after the 1948 currency reform.⁹⁹

French apprehension centers on the idea that the new Germany will simply be too big and powerful to make a reliable partner in West European integration. This apprehension is manifest in statements such as the one made by former French Prime Minister Michel Debrè in February 1990 when he spoke warily about the prospect of a united German nation: "We French, who know our neighbors well, how can we not remind all Europeans and the world as a whole of the need to guard against abuses which Germany commits in all areas when it sees an opportunity."¹⁰⁰ For these individuals, the inhuman crimes of the Third Reich are as vivid today as they were during the war. The Germans are once again asserting themselves and the result has been growing fearfulness of German hegemony among the French.

B. THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER OF THE NEW GERMANY: IMPLICATIONS FOR FRANCE

Writing between the first and second world wars, De Gaulle described Germany as "a sublime but glaucous sea where the fisherman's net hauls up monsters and treasures."¹⁰¹ This dichotomy appears to have renewed meaning and is resurfacing as the

⁹⁹ Karl Jetter, "French fears about emergence of a super economic force," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 13 December 1989, cited in The German Tribune, 24 December 1989 - No. 1400, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Nelan, "Anything to Fear?" 32.

¹⁰¹ De Gaulle as cited in "They like it and they fear it," The Economist, 27 January 1990, 50.

prevalent French view of German reunification with respect to the present economic situation.

Centuries before Bismarck's era, Germany's division into approximately 1,000, then 300, then 39 separate states was seen by the other Europeans as necessary in maintaining the continental balance of power. Since 1945, the existence of two German states has been widely regarded in much the same way. The Western allies, particularly Great Britain and France, formally backed the cause of peaceful German reunification for years. But it appears their true attitude is closer to François Mauriac's "I love Germany so much, I am happy there are two."¹⁰² While these countries have officially supported the recent reunification of Germany, it is also evident that their collective memory has allowed them to be quite content with the postwar division that, in the eyes of many Europeans, successfully contributed to the peace of the European continent for the past 45 years. Perhaps the respected German President, Richard von Weizsaecker, said it most eloquently when he wrote several years ago that, "most Europeans dislike the wall about as much as they do the idea of a large German state in the center of Europe."¹⁰³

Paradoxically, while government, intellectual and newspaper circles in Paris publicly supported and privately fretted over the idea of a unified Germany, opinion polls indicated that two of three

¹⁰² Mauriac as cited in "West German Survey," The Economist, 28 October 1989, 4.

¹⁰³ Von Weizsaecker as cited in Pierre Lellouche, "A Void at Europe's Heart," Newsweek, 27 November 1989, 4.

French citizens favored it.¹⁰⁴ Distrust for Germany lingers among those who remember the war. Among those who are fearful, the young are much more confident than the middle-aged, and the main concern that is cited consistently is Germany's economic challenge.¹⁰⁵

1. The French Economy: From the 1980s to the Present

For most of the 1980's, the French economy was declining: the economy was stalled and many of its well known companies were on the verge of collapse. But in the last few years of the decade, an economic bloom gave rise to new confidence everywhere. The French began to see themselves as a major economic power and some were beginning to cite France as, once again, the center of Europe.¹⁰⁶ French investment was back on track, growing even faster than that of its European rivals. French industry became competitive again, exports rose substantially, consumer spending saw a boom, and forecasters notched up growth predictions to three percent.¹⁰⁷

This prediction proved correct. The French economy grew by over 4 percent in 1989, an estimated 3.1 percent in 1990,

¹⁰⁴ Alan Riding, "Where Nazis Took Fierce Revenge, French Hatred for Germans Recedes," The New York Times, 7 March 1990, A6.

¹⁰⁵ "They like it," 50.

¹⁰⁶ Frank J. Comes, "France's bid to be President of Europe Inc.," Business Week, 25 April 1988, 76.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

and it is projected to grow by 2.8 percent in 1991.¹⁰⁸ For the first time in nearly 11 years, inflation in France could fall below that of Germany - to 2.9 percent.¹⁰⁹ France has become what most nations aspire to be - a low inflation, strong currency economy.

France has also been busily drafting ambitious new plans for a new Europe. French politicians argue that if the European Community becomes united economically by 1992, as planned by the Community's agenda, Paris would be the natural center and France the leading nation in this new economic order. Paramount to this idea of Paris becoming the European center is its necessarily simultaneous designation as the seat of Continental Europe's financial center. To this end, French officials have opened the door to futures and options trading and ended the monopoly trading rights of small French brokers.¹¹⁰ This new French business ethic was intended to provide confidence building measures which would, in turn perhaps, enable France to gain ground against the growing German economy.

Notwithstanding the fact that France's economic might is smaller than Germany's, some statistics on French production are relatively impressive. A country of 58 million people, France is the world's fourth largest exporter, fourth biggest capitalist economy,

¹⁰⁸ "Paris Haven," The Sunday Times, 15 April 1990, D5; David Smith, "A tale of two economies," The Sunday Times, 8 July 1990, 3/5; "World's Economic Growth Remains Sluggish," The Christian Science Monitor, 7 September 1990, 8.

¹⁰⁹ "Paris Haven," D5.

¹¹⁰ Comes, "France's bid," 80.

and has the world's third largest nuclear arsenal.¹¹¹ It is also the world's second largest producer of nuclear energy. Outwardly, at least, the French appear more sure of themselves than the people of any other European nation.

Yet, perhaps the French realize, more than any other nation, that much of being important depends on acting as if you are: De Gaulle used this prestige principle to help France recover its self-confidence after defeat in the second world war and the upheaval of decolonization in Indochina and Algeria.¹¹² However bright this French economic picture appears, whether justified or not, it has not stifled fears about a large, economically powerful, German state in the center of Europe.

2. Germany in 1991

Reunification had two aspects: the forging of normal and ever tighter links between two societies and the merging of two states.¹¹³ According to several well-publicized polls, the French welcome the prospect of a better way of life for the East Germans and are enthusiastic about its imminence. Yet the prospect of growing German power encites fears reminiscent of a Germany during World War Two.

What seemingly lies ahead for Germany is a potential economic giant capable of rising to be the dominating economic

¹¹¹"The French way of losing weight," The Economist, 8 July 1989, 33.

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ "Who's afraid of Germany?" The Economist, 18 November 1989, 54.

power in Europe. Statistical charts published in French newspapers attempt to show that the united Germany with a population of 80 million people (a quarter of all the people in Western Europe) compared to France with 58 million, and with an industrial production figure over twice that of France, will advance to become the undisputed market leader in major industries in East and West.¹¹⁴ This economic giant possesses a gross national product nearly equal to that of France and Britain combined, and at least for the present, possesses the most powerful army on the continent with the exception of the Soviet Union.

Although Chancellor Kohl insisted that a reunified Germany would respect relevant treaties and the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and that reunification would be placed in a context of European integration,¹¹⁵ many French people, including many governmental officials, and particularly the French president, were not fully convinced. President Mitterrand defined his country's rationale as follows: France supported the right of self-determination of the Germans, but not in 1990.¹¹⁶ He was said to have told Mr. Kohl that France was opposed to an unconditional end to the division of Germany and felt that neither East nor West

¹¹⁴ Karl Jetter, "French fears about emergence of a super economic force," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 13 December 1989, cited in The German Tribune, 24 December 1989 - No. 1400, 2.

¹¹⁵ "Deeper, still and deeper," The Economist, 16 December 1989, 51.

¹¹⁶ Jetter, "French fears," 2.

Germans were unconditionally entitled to self-determination.¹¹⁷

President Mitterrand was adamant that the wartime Allies and even the countries of Europe were entitled to a vote in the matter, and he went to great lengths to make his views known to the rest of the European community.

3. Mitterrand's Agenda

President Mitterrand believes France's main objective is to be able to defend herself against any aggression and therefore be able to maintain her identity and independence.¹¹⁸ Paramount to this objective, he believes, is that a sound defense is impossible without a healthy economy.¹¹⁹ He speaks often about the history of European divisions and the need for Europeans to act decisively to build a united Europe that could change the course of history.

Throughout his presidency, Mitterrand has struggled to speed European integration with the creation of the single market by 1992, and if he has his way, the expeditious creation of economic, monetary, and political union. An accepted but unspoken reason for French haste was German reunification. The French view economic and monetary union mainly as a political means of binding the Community, and specifically Germany, closer together. For France,

¹¹⁷ Uwe Karsten Petersen, "Kohl and Mitterrand make their points in private talks," Der Tagespiegel, Berlin, 5 January 1990; cited in The German Tribune, 14 January 1990 - No. 1403, 1.

¹¹⁸ Speech of M. François Mitterrand, "France's Defence," drafted at the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies, 11 October 1988, as cited in Speeches and Statements, Sp.St/LON/98/88.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

the European Community is not just a common market, but the core of a future political and economic Europe.

More specifically, President Mitterrand envisages a "European Confederation" based on the 12-member European Community which would be run by Paris with backing from Bonn.¹²⁰ His aim is to persuade the 12-nation European Community to move in the direction of a type of federal system which would complement the economic system that will emerge as the European Community dismantles its internal trade barriers by 1992. Eventually, the six European Free Trade Association countries (Austria, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland) would be allowed to join it as well, as would East European countries that have turned democratic - but only after a framework for political union in the EC has been agreed upon.

The French worry that changes in the East will harm their efforts to make the European Community more than just a high-grade common market. French concentration currently lies with monetary and political union, and they see the East European question as somewhat of a distraction to what should be the Community's main concern. The French see this as a way to "deepen" the Community.¹²¹ They believe a Community with a political dimension is finally the best way to bind Germany to Western

¹²⁰ Rudolph Chimelli, "French take a pragmatic line towards changes in Germany," Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 26 January 1990; cited in The German Tribune, 4 February 1990 - No. 1406, 3.

¹²¹ For more information on this subject see Helen Wallace, Widening and Deepening: The European Community and the New European Agenda (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1989), 24-25.

Europe. For a discussion of political union in the EC, please see page 79. Mitterrand believes that if the 12 European Community nations can truly integrate, they can become a magnet capable of attracting increasing economic and technological links with the East European countries and the Soviet Union itself - in the long run, he sees the European Community growing to the East and developing into a new world power.¹²² This new world power would assert a more independent role in the new era of detente and would compete economically against America and Japan.

Mitterrand believes that the Soviet leader faces growing difficulties and challenges to maintaining his power structure within the Soviet Union. Gorbachev reportedly made the suggestion to Mitterrand that he may fall if the democratic forces that are afoot are allowed to proceed too rapidly and sporadically. Thus, Mitterrand views the potential for disaster and a return to hostile Soviet/Western relations as able to occur at any time. This could lead to a rapid rise in old rivalries that could threaten to upset the balance of power in Europe. Mitterrand's solution to this perceived great danger is stronger, more rapid moves toward European integration. He recently stated:

If we want to transcend these traditional rivalries, then only one great thought, one great constructive endeavor, can take the place of all this. That could be a great mission for the European Community - if it is something that can prove to be

¹²² Karen Elliott House and E.S. Browning, "Mitterrand Sees Europe at the Crossroads," Wall Street Journal, 22 November 1989, A6.

stronger than everyone's desire to be master of his own village.¹²³

Mitterrand's initiative is aimed at achieving De Gaulle's well-known objective of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. However, if this initiative is successful, it will be a much more tightly knit Europe than the loose grouping of nations that De Gaulle had envisioned in the 1960s.

4. The Role of the EC after German Reunification

Mitterrand's view of unified Germany anchored tightly in the EC is a view shared by many Frenchmen as well as other Europeans. Klaus Harpprecht, a well known author and former speech writer for Willy Brandt, West German chancellor in the early 1970s, clarified this view:

The great problem of a united Germany in the past was that its weight overwhelmed the rest of Europe. Our neighbors wouldn't be quite so upset if the European Community had developed enough authority to counter-balance this fear today. The Warsaw Pact doesn't exist anymore, NATO is weakening as a force capable of providing this kind of order, and the only thing left is the European Community. The most urgent task before us is to accelerate steps toward European unity.¹²⁴

Helmut Schmidt, former West German chancellor, theorized that, "It was a major mistake not to create the European monetary system years ago, to really persuade the French that

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Craig R. Whitney, "In West Germany, Anxiety over Unity," The New York Times, 8 March 1990, A8.

Germany was willing to be a real part of the European system.”¹²⁵ He says, “We need a European Marshall Plan for Eastern Europe, and the European Community leaders should be sitting around, talking about it informally - but it isn’t happening.”¹²⁶

How the united Germans will use their economic power is, of course, the main question. It is unknown whether the EC will be able to survive in its present form or whether it will be strong enough to weather this storm and eventually evolve into a wider grouping that would amicably comprise Eastern as well as Western nations. Whether or not the EC is able to accomplish this consolidation of Eastern and Western nations, one major concern is whether it will become dominated by German economic and monetary power - what some term as a potential Fourth German Economic Reich.¹²⁷ In principle, Germany now has the potential to be the main generator of economic power and prosperity in central Europe.

a. The founding of the EC

Although Adolf Hitler was the main catalyst of the European Community, it was, after all, largely a French invention; the architect was Jean Monnet.¹²⁸ In 1950, Monnet’s proposal paved the way for the Franco-West German reconciliation which has been the

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ Jetter, "French fears," 6.

¹²⁸ Dick Leonard, "Pocket Guide to the European Community," The Economist Publications, with a Foreward by Roy Jenkins, 1989, 3-4.

essential element underlying all subsequent progress towards European unity.¹²⁹ Monnet's proposal, which was later put forward by the French government as the Schuman Plan, named after the French foreign minister, allowed for a single High Authority to supervise the disputes and future developments of the coal and steel industries of participating nations. Monnet believed that the path to European unity lay through economic, rather than military coordination.

De Gaulle saw the European Economic Community as a means of extending French influence. His relationship with Konrad Adenauer, the West German chancellor at the time, is commonly known to have been a close one. This alliance was formalized in the Franco-West German treaty of 22 January 1963 (Elysée Treaty), which provided for the coordination of the two countries' policies in foreign affairs, defense, information and cultural affairs.¹³⁰

This coordination has been spasmodic, but whenever France and West Germany have acted together within the Community their influence has been enormous and they have generally been able to achieve their objectives. Where they have not done so, the Community has tended to drift and has found it difficult or impossible to agree on a course of action.¹³¹

President Mitterrand believes much progress has been made in the coordination of Franco-German relations. He has

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, 5.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, 8.

¹³¹ *ibid.*

said on occasion that the Elysée Treaty of 1963 provided for joint action in a number of respects, but that the relevant clauses had remained "a dead letter."¹³² Thus, in January 1988, France and West Germany marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty by adding two protocols, one of which established an Economic and Financial Council. Bonn agreed to France's request for this council partly in response to French complaints that Bonn had not yet repaid France's moves with greater cooperation in economic and monetary affairs.¹³³ By signing the protocol, Mr. Kohl was said to be specifically trying to further Franco-German relations and hence, he believed, European integration as well.¹³⁴

b. Is Monetary Union over the horizon?

Behind the purported eternal friendship claimed by both sides, Franco-German relations have, in the past year, been under considerable strain. Although Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand have made several joint declarations since the breach of the Berlin Wall and have heralded their countries as the motor of European construction, officials of both governments have revealed anxiety about their diverging interests.

French officials reportedly are disturbed that despite Germany's dense commercial ties to its Western partners, German preoccupation with melding the two former states into one

¹³² Speech of Mitterrand, "France's Defence".

¹³³ David S. Yost, "Franco-German Defense Cooperation," final draft - November 1988, 39.

¹³⁴ "West German Survey," 12.

and nurturing a new friendship with the Soviet Union has distracted it from moving firmly and quickly toward European economic and monetary union.¹³⁵ In spite of Foreign Minister Genscher's advocacy of a rapid timetable for monetary union, German financial officials are apparently wary that the stability of the Deutsche Mark will be risked as a result of soaring unification costs.

Yet Kohl did agree in November 1990 with other European leaders to set up a European central bank by 1994 that would eventually govern a single currency which would supercede all others including the Deutsche Mark. Then, in a surprising turn of events that once again raised questions of Germany's commitment to economic integration and monetary union, the German central bank increased interest rates in February 1991, in a move to make the country more attractive to international investors. German officials justified the move as necessary to counteract the inflationary potential of Chancellor Kohl's plans to finance the reconstruction of eastern Germany through intense public-sector borrowing, however, many foreign officials and economists overlooked the explanation and simply claimed that the Bundesbank was sending a message that national concerns continue to far outweigh any international considerations.¹³⁶ "There are those who think of others and there are those who think of themselves," claimed Pierre Bérégovoy, the

¹³⁵ William Drozdiak, "French, Germans Reach Fork in Path of European History," The Washington Post, 22 September 1990, A17; Ian Murray, "Germans look for fuller role by France on unity," The Times, 18 September 1990, 14.

¹³⁶ Ferdinand Protzman, "Germany Stands Alone on Rates," The New York Times, 11 February 1991, C2.

French finance minister.¹³⁷ Another economist claimed that "the increase was a reminder that when these things (monetary union and economic integration) come about, it will be on Germany's terms and that for now, the Bundesbank can dictate policy to Europe."¹³⁸

Hence, the final blueprint and timetable for economic and monetary union in the EC remains largely uncertain. Since the French view tightening European links, particularly in the EC, as the means to rein in the increased economic and political power of the unified Germany, they are the most skeptical of Germany's current position in the European arena and the perceived low priority Germany has placed on European unity. For France, a strong European identity bound tightly to European institutions is the only condition under which Germany should assume its new identity.

5. Some Conclusions

A former American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, made the well known statement concerning post-World War Two Britain that it had lost an empire and not yet found a role.¹³⁹ Perhaps this statement can be applied, at least in some measure, to France. France certainly lost its empire some time ago and appears to have been struggling to make its place in the international system ever since.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ "The French way," 33.

Outwardly at least, the French appear more sure of themselves and their rank in the world than most other countries. Yet talking of rank can be a sign that one is not sure of it. One example of this is the way the French judge themselves almost obsessively against German manufactured exports.'

For many years, Germany, although the stronger of the two powers economically, was content to play the subordinate role; when the views of German leaders differed from those of France, they were often willing to defer to their partners, or at least refrain from carrying their opposition to extremes.¹⁴⁰ These times are now gone. The key to President Mitterrand's strategy to tighten European economic ties is close cooperation with Bonn. This is one reason President Mitterrand has attempted to forge even stronger bonds with Chancellor Kohl in frequent meetings during the past several years. What has also changed is that the French are finally forced to come to terms with the fact that there once again exists French reliance on others in matters of economics and defense.

France is adjusting very slowly to the fact that it is a middle-sized power. In realizing that their national market is too small to stand alone and that this "smallness" became amplified by the recently united German economic powerhouse, the French are once again learning to depend on their allies. In France, the "1992" prospect for creating a true common market in Europe has a special meaning that it lacks elsewhere in Europe.

¹⁴⁰ Leonard, "Pocket Guide," 8.

If Jean Monnet's postulate that political integration follows necessarily from economic integration is accepted, some exciting prospects lie ahead for Europe. Perhaps General de Gaulle's Europe of a 'Concert of Powers' hinged on economic integration may yet lie somewhere in the near future - perhaps 1992.

C. THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE DIVISION OF EUROPE

More so than any other West European country, French security policy has been based upon the post-war division of Europe and a West Germany laden with U.S. troops and nuclear weapons. These long-standing assumptions have been shattered by the formal renunciation of the Cold War.

Since the end of World War Two, in a divided Europe in which the Soviet Union maintained control of Eastern Europe, Western Europe has asked for and received U.S. assistance in defending itself against Soviet forces in a forward position. American military power was viewed as essential to the security of Western Europe, either because West European states were unable to defend themselves or because they had grown accustomed to the U.S. shouldering the burden.¹⁴¹

This U.S. nuclear and conventional commitment to Europe allowed France to withdraw from NATO's integrated military structure, claiming that its independence, autonomy and freedom of action guaranteed by its own nuclear arsenal warranted this special

¹⁴¹ Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Beyond the Cold War," Foreign Affairs, 1989/1990, 12.

status. However, France's special status is dependent on three things: the continued U.S. commitment of weapons and troops to Europe (which provide de facto protection for France as well); a united Germany committed to western ideals and institutions, and particularly committed to continued bilateral cooperation arrangements with France; and the continued existence of the postwar division of Europe.¹⁴²

Faced with certain U.S. military and nuclear force reductions in Europe, a united Germany whose future role in NATO and the EC the French view as unpredictable, the formal conclusion to the Cold War, and the uncertain political and economic future of the Soviet Union and the East European nations, the long-standing foundations of French security policy have been unprecedentedly shaken. Thus, the uncertainty of events and a growing realization of its own limitations in discerning its future role in the newly evolving international order, are conditioning France's approach in the current political arena.

D. FRENCH GOALS FOR EUROPE'S FUTURE SECURITY ORDER

French policy-makers believe that despite movements in the USSR toward democratization and economic liberalization, Russia's great military power must still be offset by Western military power. A largely unpredictable Soviet future has led President Mitterrand to warn that "nothing can guarantee that a new Soviet power - which might not be communist - wouldn't still be military and totalitarian,

¹⁴² David S. Yost, "Evolving French Attitudes," 1.

and that would be a great danger."¹⁴³ However, the French also recognize the need to prevent the Soviet Union from feeling isolated in a rapidly evolving anti-communist world.

These same desires for democratization and economic liberalization are advanced for the East European countries, who are increasingly subscribing to membership in the EC as a means to obtain this democratization and economic liberalization. However, the French have led discussions in the EC aimed at protecting it from dilution of its political goals that current enlargement would bring.

Of great importance to the French is the goal of keeping Germany firmly tied to Western institutions, specifically NATO, the EC, and the WEU. Indeed, France deems the future of these institutions as determined by German choices.¹⁴⁴ Naturally France would prefer to keep or obtain the leadership role or a shared leadership role in each of these institutions.

Finally, and above all, France would like to maintain the status quo with respect to its perceived special status including its independence, autonomy of decision and freedom of action. In order to accomplish this goal, it is viewed as essential to maintain the U.S. commitment to Europe, and NATO is seen as the organization most likely to ensure this commitment.

¹⁴³ David S. Yost, "France in the New Europe," Foreign Affairs, Winter 1990/1991, 109.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 115.

E. ALTERNATIVES FOR A NEW SECURITY ORDER

1. Neutrality

In 1952, in the midst of the Cold War, Stalin suggested to the Germans that reunification could possibly be offered in return for neutrality. Bonn flatly rejected the offer as it did again 40 years later when President Gorbachev suggested this as the price for unity. Although neutrality appeared initially attractive to some Frenchmen, it was later determined potentially the most destabilizing of all options.

Although Germany is currently tied to NATO, the French fear that continued or unchanged participation in NATO cannot be guaranteed. The French perceive that German leaders may soon insist that full sovereignty and the "normalization" of Germany's status dictate the removal of most, if not all, foreign military troops and nuclear weapons including those based on aircraft.¹⁴⁵ In French eyes, this could lead to a power vacuum in Central Europe that would place France on the "front line" of a potential instability zone and create the possibility of Russian coercion of Germany or Western Europe as a whole.¹⁴⁶

Others have claimed that without U.S. nuclear weapons in Germany, a dangerous imbalance in the center of Europe would exist. This imbalance would by necessity, eventually drive the Germans to seek nuclear weapons of their own, regardless of the fact that

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 113.

¹⁴⁶ Yost, "Evolving French Attitudes," 2.

Germany has renounced this.¹⁴⁷ This in turn is a short step from the development of a nationalistic military policy or the attempt to organize a "Mitteleuropa" security zone under German hegemony.

If Germany begins to loosen ties with NATO and pursue a more independent political path, there is also concern that a German-Russian axis may develop. Many cite references to historical precedents - the Rapallo Pact, the Hitler/Stalin Pact, and even the German/Soviet cooperation treaty signed in late 1990 - as evidence of this possibility. Although the Germans would have less to gain than the Soviets in this arrangement, the situation would be enticing to Russia who would benefit by desperately needed economic aid and technical expertise.

If Germany were to move down the path of neutrality or begin to organize Central Europe under German control or lean in the direction of a German-Russian axis, France would soon become politically and then most likely economically isolated. Because this chain of events is seen as beginning from a denuclearization of Germany, the U.S. commitment to Europe, and specifically, maintaining U.S. military forces and nuclear weapons on German territory, are deemed vital to French security.

2. The Pan-European Structure and the CSCE

Prior to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact's military alliance on 31 March 1991, President Gorbachev's desire was that NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization "should not remain

¹⁴⁷ Richard Perle, "The Right Kind of Missile Ban for Europe," The Wall Street Journal, 1 May 1990, A20.

military alliances," but instead evolve into "military-political alliances and, later on, just political alliances."¹⁴⁸ This view was underlined by former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze during his December 1989 visit to NATO headquarters when he stated: "We believe the Warsaw Treaty and NATO at this crucial stage in the European process can play an important stabilizing role in stabilizing Europe."¹⁴⁹

However, the traditional Soviet objective of dissolving both alliances in favor of a system of collective security for Europe has not been abandoned. This pan-European collective security structure has been advanced by Gorbachev as the "Common European Home." By invoking De Gaulle's Atlantic-to-the-Urals geographic definition of Europe, he advocated a Soviet presence and role in the Europe of the future.¹⁵⁰ The vehicle that has been proposed by the Soviets as the means of ensuring the security and peace of Europe is the CSCE.

France initially championed such ideas as evidence of Soviet "new thinking." Mitterrand had long held similar ideals of a "European Confederation," although the specifics of which have never been identified. However, the enthusiasm of some Germans, notably Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher who began speculating about "transcending the alliances" in this "all-European peace order" that

¹⁴⁸ Peter Courterier, "Quo vadis NATO?" Survival, March/April 1990, 144.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Jim Hoagland, "Europe's Destiny," Foreign Affairs, 1989/1990, 36.

would produce "collective security,"¹⁵¹ provoked concern among the French who began to see this movement as another Soviet attempt to break up NATO and de-couple the U.S. from Europe.

The French acknowledge the value of the CSCE in giving the East European countries and the Soviet Union an organization to assist in the transition to democratic societies. However, the French consensus has been that for the immediate future, the CSCE is woefully inadequate to assume primary responsibility for a stable European peace - its cumbersome size and unanimity rule yield too many uncertainties to serve as a basis for real stability.

Recently, in an attempt to strengthen the CSCE by institutionalizing it, it was agreed that the CSCE should accomplish the following: adopt a program for regular consultations every year and CSCE review conferences every two years; establish a small CSCE secretariat; enact a mechanism to monitor elections in all 34 CSCE countries; install a Center for the Prevention of Conflict that might serve as a forum for exchanges of military information, discussions of unusual military activities and the conciliation of disputes involving CSCE member states; and create a CSCE parliamentary body, the Assembly of Europe, to be based on the existing parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe.¹⁵² However, even with this enhanced role, the French along with the U.S. and other Western allies successfully turned aside the suggestion from some East

¹⁵¹ Josef Joffe, "Germany After NATO," Harper's Magazine, September 1990, 32.

¹⁵² Henning Wegener, "The transformed Alliance," NATO Review, August 1990, 4; "The thrill of Europe's rebirth," The Economist, 24 November 1990, 49.

European nations that the organization replace the NATO alliance and the nearly defunct Warsaw Pact as Europe's main military security structure.¹⁵³

The French share the position that although it has been agreed to grant the CSCE increased authority and powers, it will still be too weak to guarantee a meaningful American political and military presence on the continent besides having few institutional safeguards that could play an effective role in prospective crises. Hence, the CSCE remains inadequate to provide a sufficient basis to radically alter the Western alliance system.

3. The European Community

In the current flux in international relations, many French officials are championing the idea that the European Community should transform itself from a purely economic and trading organization into a political and later a security entity with a common defense policy. Indeed, France has been one of the major proponents behind the campaign for an EC political role. Yet a political or security role for the EC is inconsistent with the French necessity to maintain national decision-making autonomy. Indicative of this inconsistency, President Mitterrand, who views the EC as a means of "binding in" Europe's economic, military and political links, stops short of promoting the EC as a security organization which would usurp more than a little of his nation's sovereignty.

¹⁵³ George de Lama, "Europe seeks to bolster security with conflict prevention center," Chicago Tribune, 3 October 1990, 9.

The renewed emphasis on continuing political cohesion in the EC occurred when the prospect of German reunification became a reality. In order for the EC to assume the responsibilities of a collective security organization, a political union would have to occur whereby the members contribute to a common European stance towards security matters on the continent and abroad. While the ultimate institutional structure of this European political union is uncertain, it would by necessity include most of the traditional responsibilities of a nation-state, with responsibility for external security and stability being among the most important.¹⁵⁴

If one adheres to the above conclusion, the recent crisis in the Gulf has brought to the forefront the obvious difficulties that lie ahead in forging a common European political stance. Europe's divided response to the war in the Gulf has led many who prior to the crisis believed political union could be achieved in a matter of years, to now believe unity will only occur after decades.

Supporters of European unity were critical of the EC's disregard of the crisis after the Iraqi President ignored the 12 nations' eleventh hour attempt to avert war by final diplomatic measures. After Hussein's refusal to comply with the 15 January UN deadline to withdraw his troops from Kuwait, Britain, France and Germany pursued independent, and often divergent, policies in the region. These independent moves by EC members led the current EC president, Jacques Poos, Luxembourg's foreign minister to state that the war has demonstrated "the political insignificance of Europe," and

¹⁵⁴ Christopher Bertram, "The German Question," Foreign Affairs, Spring 1990, 55.

the Belgian foreign minister to concede that "Europe is an economic giant, a political dwarf and a military worm."¹⁵⁵

Since the beginning of the crisis, Britain's 35,000 troops in the gulf were closely aligned with troops from the U.S. lending further credence to the special relationship that has long existed between the two countries. The French pursued independent diplomatic measures for a while, irritating Britain and the U.S.¹⁵⁶ When the Iraqi President spurned French peace proposals as well, Mitterrand too placed the French troops under the command of U.S. forces.

The German response to the crisis, however, was the most surprising. Political analysts are now claiming that Bonn, in displaying a clear determination to sit out the Gulf War with the least possible involvement, has raised strong doubts about whether it can muster the political resolve to play the major role in European security that its position as Europe's prime economic power would seem to dictate.¹⁵⁷ One Dutch analyst claimed: "Only months ago Europe was worried that a newly reunified Germany would dominate the continent - now the European fear is that Germany is not reliable in a crisis."¹⁵⁸ Perhaps the most stinging criticism, though, came from the Turkish president, Turgut Ozal, who was angered by

¹⁵⁵ Craig R. Whitney, "Gulf Fighting Shatters Europeans' Fragile Unity," The New York Times, 25 January 1991, A7.

¹⁵⁶ "A light is dimmed," The Economist, 19 January 1991, 48.

¹⁵⁷ "Gulf War: European unity fails its first test," Jane's Defence Weekly, 9 February 1991, 117.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

Germany's hesitation over whether to join NATO in militarily defending Turkey against a potential Iraqi attack. "I think," he said, "Germany has become so rich that it has completely lost its fighting spirit."¹⁵⁹

Some have explained the divergent responses across Europe as simply distinct and varied public opinion tied closely to historical phenomenon: British and French citizens expect international roles for their countries, whereas German and also Spanish citizens reflect strong veins of anti-interventionist sentiment.¹⁶⁰ A recent poll in Germany suggests many Germans are opposed to an international role for their country, while the country they most admired as a model for Germany was rich and neutral Switzerland.¹⁶¹

In spite of such polls and recent German passivity to the crisis in the Gulf, German policy makers insist that Germany will remain bound to European institutions. Indicative of this was the recent launching of a new plan for a common security policy by the foreign ministers of France and Germany. The plan calls for a "progressive development of an organic relationship" between the EC and the WEU which would lead, by 1996, to a decision on their integration.¹⁶² Until 1996, the WEU would be tasked with deciding

¹⁵⁹ Whitney, "Gulf Fighting Shatters Europeans," A7.

¹⁶⁰ Howard LaFranchi, "Europeans Fall Short of Common Foreign Policy," The Christian Science Monitor, 28 January 1991, 3.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² "Of bridges, pillars and canals," The Economist, 9 February 1991, 52.

and adopting common security policies under the guidance of the European Council. The Council would decide by unanimity which subjects were ready for adopting a common foreign policy; then foreign ministers would decide policy in these areas by majority vote.¹⁶³

France has long espoused the virtues of an enhanced role for the European Council.¹⁶⁴ A country with a weak parliament and strong president, it is not surprising that France would expect the European Council to play a presidential role within the EC. France is also pleased that the plan calls for the WEU to become NATO's "European pillar," something else the French have long desired to strengthen.

In spite of recent proposals concerning European integration, the emergence of a united Europe with a defense and security dimension is likely to continue by small steps. Coordinating the political and military agendas of long-sovereign nations will not come easily or quickly. Although it has been argued that the shortcomings illustrated by Europe's reaction to the Gulf War could give Europe precisely the shock it needed to seriously begin working toward a joint political and security policy, the common impression among European officials is that the war left Europe even further divided than ever.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ See "Cardinal differences," The Economist, 3 November 1990, 56; "Who wants what in the brave new Europe," The Economist, 1 December 1990, 46; and "France pulls away from de Gaulle," The Economist, 15 December 1990, 45.

Currently, the debate is ongoing as to whether the EC should concentrate its efforts on assuming this political and security role or concentrate on an all-European trade and monetary arrangement. If it chose to sponsor a larger economic framework, it could incorporate not only the remaining advanced industrial countries of Western Europe, but also the newly forming democratic countries of Eastern Europe currently attempting to adopt market-type economies. In this case, the EC's charter would be limited to facilitating internal economic interaction and protecting the economic interests of all its members. If the EC chose to evolve into a security organization, its membership would necessarily be restricted to the current level for some period of time.

The French desire is that the EC maintain the momentum of political cohesion and concentrate its energies to complete its union. Any enlargement that could slow down the process or dilute the political will must be postponed until the EC has definitely agreed on its future structure.¹⁶⁵ However, again, the French do not see the evolution of a political role for the EC as obviating or replacing the role of NATO. The United States has no connection with the EC - it is, and will remain by definition, a European institution. The French believe that if political union is achieved, it would create a strong European pillar in NATO, balancing American leadership as the U.S. and its partners seek to redefine NATO's role in the new era of East/West relations. However, the French also firmly state that any

¹⁶⁵ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt, "The Franco-German Axis: Core of the New Europe," New Perspectives Quarterly, Spring 1990, 15.

proposal for European unity would be a complement to NATO - NATO must still be maintained to ensure the U.S. commitment to Europe.

4. The Western European Union

The recent proposal presented by the French and German governments and strongly endorsed by the Italians which would push the EC into political union called for: merging the EC with the Western European Union or WEU; strengthening the European Council of Ministers; and taking all foreign policy and defense decisions by majority vote.¹⁶⁶ Although majority voting on all foreign and defense issues would give France the right of veto, the French would still be required to surrender some national sovereignty. Even though this would be inconsistent with the French demand for national decision-making autonomy, France reportedly was ready to do this.¹⁶⁷ However, the French scheme would not merge the WEU with the EC immediately - only in the long term would it be gradually fused with the EC's political cooperation procedures.¹⁶⁸

The WEU was created as a result of the U.S. desire to have Europeans increase their contribution to the defense of the region. The underlying objectives were to strengthen peace and security and promote European integration and close cooperation with other European organizations. Simultaneously, the WEU's work has

¹⁶⁶ Michael Binyon, "Germany and France link to speed EC political union," The Times, 8 October 1990, 22. Also see, Jane's Defense Weekly, 27 October 1990, 837.

¹⁶⁷ Binyon, "Germany and France link," 22.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*

complemented that of the Atlantic Alliance enhancing the European role to the benefit of Western security.¹⁶⁹

As the only European Parliamentary body mandated by treaty to discuss all aspects of security including defense, the French have actively promoted the value of the WEU. The long term goal of the WEU is to develop a more cohesive European defense identity¹⁷⁰ which the French perceive as promoting the "European pillar," something they have continuously advocated. Until the EC and NATO have assumed political or security roles with which the French are satisfied, they will continue to espouse the value of the WEU as a complement to, not a replacement of, NATO.

5. NATO

For the French, the commitment of the U.S. to the defense of Europe remains indispensable for French security policy and the most likely means of maintaining that commitment is through NATO. France withdrew from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966 claiming it was a U.S.-dominated framework limiting the freedom of action of its members and inhibiting French independence. However, after withdrawal France could continue to benefit from the U.S. strategic nuclear "umbrella" and NATO's efforts to deter the Soviets and neutralize German power. Indeed, the foundations of French security policy have assumed a large U.S. nuclear and conventional force presence in Germany, which as part of an extensive integrated

¹⁶⁹ Willem Van Eekelen, "Building a new European security order: WEU's contribution," August 1990, 19.

¹⁷⁰ Western European Union, "Platform on European Security Interests," The Hague, 27 October 1987.

alliance structure, provide a de facto forward glacis for France's protection.¹⁷¹

With the formal end of the Cold War and the East-West division fading, the universal consensus concerning the future role of NATO is that it must by necessity evolve from a strictly security alliance to one tending toward political orientation. French views on how NATO should be reoriented are generally vague but center on a much looser framework, dominated by the Europeans, with a leadership role for France and with a continuing and important supporting role for the U.S.

Given the expectation of large-scale withdrawals of U.S. troops and weapons from Europe, strong speculation has arisen as to whether the French would be willing to return to NATO's integrated military structure or be more receptive to basing U.S. or other foreign forces on French soil. This argument could even be more strongly advanced for the case of a German government adopting an anti-nuclear stance and expelling all foreign forces and weapons or an assumption of power in the Soviet Union by the military leadership or some other authoritative, repressive element. Yet, France continues to refuse any suggestion of returning to NATO's integrated military structure or of allowing foreign forces on its soil. "Please," said President Mitterrand recently, "let us have no more speculation on this subject."¹⁷² However, French officials say behind

¹⁷¹ Yost, "France and the New Europe," 107.

¹⁷² Ian Gambles, "Prospects for West European Security Co-operation," Adelphi Papers 244, Autumn 1989, 26.

closed doors that France would be ready to integrate fully into a NATO that had a European commander, rather than an American one.¹⁷³

The French cite conflicting strategic conceptions between them and the Alliance as another inhibitor to their return to NATO. One reason cited for France's withdrawal from NATO was de Gaulle's disagreement with the U.S. doctrine of flexible response. He believed that the U.S. would in all probability postpone any nuclear employment until Europe had been devastated by conventional warfare, when an earlier use of nuclear weapons may have prevented war altogether. With NATO's recent endorsement of the use of nuclear weapons as a last resort, the French criticisms have remained unchanged: deterrence, they contend, is intended to prevent wars and not win them.

Although France acknowledges the strategic necessity of the maintenance of a U.S. military presence in Europe and NATO as the most probable institution for ensuring this presence, French actions are making their own desires increasingly difficult. The French instinctively recoil from altering any national policies which would make it easier for American forces to remain in Europe in adequate strength. Acknowledged one senior U.S. diplomat, "We are having a dialogue of the deaf with the French: we are urging consequential thought on them, and saying they can't have it both ways."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ "France pulls away," The Economist, 46.

¹⁷⁴ John Newhouse, "The Diplomatic Round," The New Yorker, 27 August 1990, 87.

Another area the French refuse to support which in turn could have the effect of undermining Alliance continuity is the idea of multi-national corps for NATO. The Alliance's July 1990 decision to reshape the army corps along multi-national lines made up of national units was viewed by most allies as making a continued foreign military presence more palatable to host nations, and particularly, to the German public. However, the French saw the initiative as operationally problematic and politically undesirable. They believe such a structure would deepen integration under U.S. authority, postponing a necessary and long overdue adjustment of European/American leadership responsibilities.¹⁷⁵

However, the French have also not been particularly supportive of the idea of a specifically West European defense force.¹⁷⁶ This new scheme of a European army under EC auspices could again have the effect of usurping French autonomy of decision. Overall, rather than supporting vehicles which would be of utility in advancing their own political goals, the French instead are continuing to spout the Gaullist rhetoric of the ultimate French duty to uphold its rank.

6. The Franco-German Axis

The ultimate vision for French security policy is a stronger, more autonomous West European defense posture centered around close Franco-German relations and a diminished European

¹⁷⁵ Yost, "France and the New Europe," 119.

¹⁷⁶ "Preparing the path for a European army," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 5 January 1991, 15; David Marsh, "Bonn concern over Paris defence stance," *Financial Times*, 11 October 1990, 40.

dependence on the U.S. Key to this scenario are strong common policies, governing economics and politics, with Germany.

Since the revival in 1963 of the defense clauses of the Franco-German friendship treaty, known as the Elysée Treaty, the two countries have strengthened their military ties establishing joint defense committees and even forming an unprecedented 5,000-man joint brigade. Their special relationship is one of a carefully fostered and constantly nurtured partnership, and one that remains sensitive and fragile.

However, relations between Kohl and Mitterrand - never as close as those between De Gaulle and Adenauer - have come under increasing strain over the past year. The Germans are irritated over Mitterrand's December 1989 rush to visit newly-liberated East Berlin appearing to lend staying power to the East German state; his apparent attempt to renew the French-Soviet alliance against Germany, specifically against German reunification; his public insistence on numerous conditions for German reunification including German guarantees for the Polish frontier; and his decision to withdraw nearly all of the 50,000 French troops from German soil by 1995 despite clear signals that Mr. Kohl would prefer most to remain.¹⁷⁷

The French have also been annoyed with the Germans over a series of incidents: Kohl's sudden announcement of his 10-

¹⁷⁷ Among numerous sources on this subject see: "A relationship in the balance," The Economist, 6 October 1990, 54; and Yost, "France and the New Europe," 112. For the French pull-out from Germany see, JAC Lewis, "France to begin force pull-out," Jane's Defence Weekly, 1 September 1990, 301; JAC Lewis, "France moves on German pull-out," Jane's Defence Weekly, 24 November 1990, 1011.

point plan for German unity without prior consultation with his allies; his hesitation over the Polish frontier; his push for German economic unity without concern for the EC's monetary union; and his direct dealings with Gorbachev during their July 1990 summit.¹⁷⁸

In spite of this recent strain which could lead to somewhat less friendly bilateral relations than those of recent years, the Paris/Bonn axis will most likely continue to be the driving force behind European integration. France will remain profoundly interested in having a common policy with Germany and will continue to place a high priority on its bilateral relations with the Germans.

¹⁷⁸ "A relationship," The Economist, 54; Yost, "France and the New Europe," 112.

V. THE IMPLICATIONS OF FRANCE'S ROLE IN THE GULF CRISIS

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and the events that occurred since then have destroyed France's claim to have a special relationship with the Arab world in general, and Iraq in particular. France's daily tactical oscillations over the course of the crisis, including the final hours which preceded the allied air attack on Iraq, provided telling signs of a nation deeply mired in a strategic quandary. The fluidity of the situation in the Gulf since 2 August, indeed the fluidity of the emerging international system as a whole, have raised the necessity of tightening links between France and the United States. However, although an identity of interests between the two states seems to be emerging both in the Gulf and beyond, France's "Atlantic option" is not a choice that will be readily accepted in a society still mesmerized by the Gaullist ideals of nationalism and independence.

President Mitterrand's strong support of U.S. policy in Operation Desert Storm does, however, have historical precedent. Although an un-swerving nationalist, President De Gaulle stood by President John F. Kennedy during the 1961 Bay of Pigs crisis in Cuba, indicating in that instance, at least, that he was more anti-Communist than anti-American. In 1980, Mitterrand expressed sympathy for President Jimmy Carter's unsuccessful attempt to free the U.S. hostages being held in Teheran. Mitterrand later sided, in 1982, with Britain during the Falklands War against Argentina which France had

previously equipped with Exocet missiles. In both cases, Mitterrand defied the left-wing of his Socialist Party who preferred to support the Third World countries.¹⁷⁹

Mitterrand's decision to send a military force to the Gulf was not simple or automatic. At the end of the 1960's, De Gaulle set his Middle East policy on a pro-Arab course and it has been adhered to by all successive presidents. Between 1974 and 1988, France and Iraq signed 20 agreements of military cooperation and nine security agreements.¹⁸⁰ President Giscard d'Estaing's administration even went so far as to sell a nuclear plant to Iraq (allegedly for civilian purposes) however, the plant was promptly destroyed by the Israelis. Although Mitterrand's first government considered the sale of a second plant to Baghdad, the idea was later dropped due to internal and external governmental pressure.

However, the close ties between Iraq and France did lead to France becoming one of Iraq's major suppliers of arms - second only to the Soviet Union. During the past ten to 15 years, France provided Iraq with a formidable arsenal of sophisticated weapons, worth billions of dollars, to assist Baghdad's secular, socialist government in its war against Iran's Islamic fundamentalist rulers.¹⁸¹ French firms delivered more than 100 Mirage F1 fighter jets, 600 Exocet antiship missiles, 1,000 Roland surface-to-air missiles and 6,000 Hot and Milan antitank missiles to Iraq since Mitterrand was elected

¹⁷⁹ Janice Valls-Russell, "Mitterrand Takes a Strong Stand," The New Leader, 3 September 1990, 7.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸¹ William Drozdiak, "France Denounces Iraq's Offer," The Washington Post, 24 August 1990, A31.

President in 1981.¹⁸² Although some have severely criticized the French role in building Iraq's arsenal as an inappropriate policy of "shoveling weapons to Iraq,"¹⁸³ Mitterrand has supported France's role as one he does not regret. To him the alternative would have meant Iran's Islamic fundamentalist revolution could have swept through the entire Arab world. "At that time, the historical situation required us" to arm Iraq, Mitterrand has claimed.¹⁸⁴

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait eventually forced France to reassess its Middle East policy. The French terminated arms sales and credits to Iraq (France had temporarily suspended all arms deliveries to Iraq in 1989 due to a debt repayment dispute); embraced the trade embargo; and in a political rather than military move, sent the carrier *Clemenceau* (carrying helicopters) to the Gulf. However, throughout the initial period of the crisis, the French continued, in Gaullist fashion, their pretensions of international autonomy. In one U.S. critic's words the French response was "a mixture of muddled policy, trying to have it both ways, ingrained cynicism, Gaullist-style posturing and domestic politics."¹⁸⁵

President Mitterrand initially raised strong objections to the U.S. calls for an economic embargo of Iraq and Kuwait. Ostensibly to

¹⁸² William Drozdiak, "France Sends Independent Naval Force; Britain Joins U.S. Plane, Ship Building," The Washington Post, 10 August 1990, A26.

¹⁸³ Flora Lewis, "Mitterrand's Cynical Gaullist Posturing," The New York Times, 16 January 1991, A19.

¹⁸⁴ William Drozdiak, "France Sends 4,000 More Troops, To Seek an Air Blockade of Iraq," The Washington Post, 16 September 1990, A38.

¹⁸⁵ Lewis, "Mitterrand's Posturing," A19.

avoid raising the specter of a Western crusade against the Arab world, Mitterrand also in early August expanded the French naval force in the Gulf and sent ground units and advisors to Saudi Arabia but vowed that they would not join the multinational defense command assembled under U.S. leadership. Any eventual military action, he stressed, would be carried out "in cooperation and coordination" with the United States "but only under French officers."¹⁸⁶ Mitterrand also stated that he wished to allow every opportunity for the conflict "to be resolved by the Arab community," however, "if that proves impossible, France will assume its own responsibilities."¹⁸⁷

This less than firm position taken by President Mitterrand was criticized by many as a French attempt to win special treatment from the Iraqi government. When it was discovered that French citizens in Baghdad and Kuwait had been moved by Iraqi authorities to potential target areas to shield Iraq from attack by Western forces and France responded by ordering its fleet to use force to ensure compliance with the U.N. embargo, Iraq did indeed offer a privileged deal to the French. Iraq offered to free some of the French citizens as a sign of trust in the bilateral relationship and in the hope that France would withdraw the forces it had sent to the Gulf to enforce the U.N. sanctions.

However, the French government spurned the offer as an Iraqi attempt to undermine Western unity and to lure one of its most

¹⁸⁶ Drozdiak, "France Sends Independent," A26.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*

important trading partners into breaking ranks with the U.N. mandated sanctions. In fact the offer induced France to "reaffirm its full solidarity" with all the countries whose nationals were being held by Iraqi authorities.¹⁸⁸ France's shift in position to one more closely aligned with that of the U.S. came after Mitterrand publicly denounced Saddam Hussein's unwillingness to pursue plausible diplomatic solutions to the crisis and his clear intention to hold foreigners to thwart any military attack.

Mitterrand's shift to support of the American position was not welcomed by all members of the French government, however. Well known for his pro-Arab sympathies, former French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, who was chosen to interface with the PLO in Tunis, made no secret of the fact that he had asked PLO leader Yasser Arafat to intercede on behalf of French nationals captive in Iraq and Kuwait.¹⁸⁹ While condemning the invasion of Kuwait, Cheysson's remarks about Saddam Hussein were a blend of appeasement and admiration. Of much greater significance, the defense minister at that time, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who had previously proclaimed that enforcing the embargo through a blockade would be an act of war, became an outspoken critic of the shift in French policy and the previously alluded to political division within the government became internationally apparent.

¹⁸⁸ Drozdiak, "France Denounces," A29. Also see William Drozdiak, "Use of Force Authorized By France," The Washington Post, 20 August 1990, A15.

¹⁸⁹ Stuart Wavell, "Breaking up is hard to do as Paris ends 20 year love affair with Baghdad," The Sunday Times, 26 August 1990, 1/10a.

Chevènement, who was already under intense government scrutiny over disagreements concerning the defense budget and European unity, had refused to leave his vacation retreat in Tuscany to assume his cabinet responsibilities during the crisis and even disassociated himself from France's military actions. "They don't need me to carry out Bush's policies: I'm going back to Tuscany," he announced, and did.¹⁹⁰ Chevènement was so anguished by the prospect of war in the Gulf that on 21 August 1990 he issued an anonymous communique questioning France's position. Although he was reportedly reprimanded by President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Rocard, Chevènement continued to insist that "should there be a war and should we take part, it must be France's war: France must remain mistress of her commitments."¹⁹¹ Chevènement is also widely known as one of the founding members of the Franco-Iraqi Friendship Society.

Not surprisingly then, Chevènement was uncharacteristically silent when on 14 September 1990, Iraqi soldiers violated international law by forcing their way into the French ambassador's residence in Kuwait and taking away three French citizens presumably to join other Western hostages located at the potential military target areas. Mitterrand responded by sending 4,000 more ground troops backed by tanks and combat aircraft to Saudi Arabia and initiating a proposal to the U.N. to extend the land and sea blockade to cover air traffic. This move had the effect of pushing

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Valls-Russell, "Mitterrand Takes," 8.

France's military engagement beyond embargo enforcement to a potentially offensive footing (by the end of September France had 13,000 troops in the Gulf region) and more closely aligning the French and U.S. positions.¹⁹² Yet even though the French ground forces were to coordinate closely with the multinational force of American and Arab troops, Mitterrand continued to insist that France retain its independent military command.

Mitterrand's next instance of sending conflicting signals to Iraq came in late September in a speech delivered to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. While claiming that "France is acting in close agreement with its 12 partners of the European Community and with those of the Western European Union, in close coordination with the military forces of the United States, of the Arab countries and of others which have been dispatched to the Middle East for the same purposes," Mitterrand then specifically linked the Palestinian issue to the crisis claiming that if Iraq declares "its intention to withdraw its forces, to free the hostages, everything becomes possible."¹⁹³ When Iraq announced later that it would release the 327 French hostages in "appreciation of the free French people's rejection of Bush's aggressive means and the use of arms against Iraq,"¹⁹⁴ French diplomats acknowledged that Mitterrand's speech

¹⁹² Howard LaFranchi, "France Toughens Stance on Gulf," Christian Science Monitor, 17 September 1990, 3.

¹⁹³ François Mitterrand, "The Rule of Law: Kuwait and Iraq," as cited in Vital Speeches Of The Day, Vol LVII, No. 1, 15 October 1990, 6.

¹⁹⁴ "Still in step, mostly," The Economist, 27 October 1990, 53.

may have encouraged Iraq's latest overtures to France.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, Mitterrand, on other occasions was becoming increasingly insistent that the U.N. not have a double standard in its handling of the Middle East and continued to link old conflicts with the current crisis. The French government's position became one of pressing for tougher U.N. action on the killing of Palestinians by Israeli policemen in the occupied territories and the fate of Lebanon.

Hence, Mitterrand's eleventh hour solo attempt at one final diplomatic resolution to the crisis came as no apparent surprise. Mitterrand relayed to Iraq that his foreign minister, Roland Dumas, would stand ready to fly to Baghdad at any time up to the UN deadline for an Iraqi withdrawal, in a final attempt to avert conflict. However, President Hussein never responded to the French proposal which, typical of French diplomacy, was sent to him without the knowledge of any of France's allies. This last uncoordinated, independent action by Mitterrand drew a cautious, if not disapproving, reaction from the U.S. and British governments. The allied policy-makers feared that the move by France would be taken as criticism of U.S. conduct, even if not intended as such, and that the Iraqi president would again perceive the initiative as evidence of disunity in the coalition.

Mitterrand's efforts at a last-minute compromise, an apparent attempt to address growing anti-war sentiment in France, helped to assure overwhelming French parliamentary support for the military

¹⁹⁵ Howard LaFranchi, "Iraq Woos France With Hostage Release," Christian Science Monitor, 13 October 1990, 3.

alternative that was approved 16 January in the National Assembly by a vote of 523 to 43 (with two abstentions) and the Senate (219 to 25).¹⁹⁶ Mitterrand's hard line speech to the Parliament and the resulting vote erased lingering doubts about France's commitment to the allied effort in the Gulf, doubts that had been rekindled by the latest French peace initiative. This move was followed by the uncertain but long-awaited announcement that France would place its 10,000 troops under U.S. command for "pre-determined missions" to liberate Kuwait. The move represented an extraordinary show of solidarity by a country whose military doctrine holds that only the president is empowered to send forces into war and that French soldiers can take their orders only from French officers in the national chain of command.¹⁹⁷

Although Mitterrand declared that it was "inconceivable" that France would not join the U.S., Britain and other international coalition members in forcibly terminating Iraq's occupation, the status of the 10,000 French troops and 76 combat aircraft in Saudi Arabia had remained ambiguous because France had insisted on maintaining an independent military command ever since De Gaulle removed the country from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966. However, there was ambivalence among U.S., British and even many French officials over the content of the accord which was

¹⁹⁶ Alan Riding, "France Puts Its Gulf Force Under U.S. Command," The New York Times, 17 January 1991, A10.

¹⁹⁷ William Drozdiak and R. Jeffrey Smith, "French Decision Makes Coalition Complete," The Washington Post, 17 January 1991, A27; and Tyler Marshall and Rone Tempest, "European Allies React Somewhat Guardedly," Los Angeles Times, 17 January 1991, A26.

finally concluded at 8pm on Wednesday, 16 January, only hours before the first attack on Iraq. Although the accord placed French forces under U.S. command, the Franco-American protocol agreement promoted by the defense minister, Chevènement, effectively barred French planes and troops from entering Iraqi territory.¹⁹⁸ Many French felt that a conditional engagement limited to Kuwaiti territory was ineffective and unacceptable, threatening France's role in deciding the new world order which would follow victory.

After three days of contradictory statements by Chevènement and Mitterrand, the French President clarified the country's military and political objectives in the war by claiming that Iraq's "military-industrial potential" must be destroyed and that the French were indeed prepared to carry out attacks inside Iraqi territory.¹⁹⁹

Mitterrand's statement, not insignificantly, followed a dramatic shift in French public opinion in favor of strong French participation in the war. Several polls conducted immediately prior to Mitterrand's clarification, indicated more than two-thirds of the French supported a strong French presence alongside the U.S. and British.²⁰⁰ In the final days prior to the expiration of the UN deadline for Iraq's withdrawal, polls indicated more than half were

¹⁹⁸ Stuart Wavell, "'Half-hearted' Mitterrand takes the flak," The Sunday Times, 20 January 1991, 1.2.

¹⁹⁹ "France Says It Is Prepared To Attack Iraqi Targets," The Christian Science Monitor, 22 January 1991, 6.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

against the war.²⁰¹ One author further noted that Mitterrand authorized French forces to hit targets in Iraq as well as occupied Kuwait only after his most important political rival, former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing claimed that a policy of bombing only Kuwait was equivalent to a World War Two decision by the Allies to bomb occupied France and spare Germany.²⁰²

Whatever prompted Mitterrand to override Chevènement and declare France's willingness to bomb Iraq, the result was Chevènement's resignation. Under attack for his dovish position on the Iraqi crisis since the day of the Kuwaiti invasion, Chevènement had been accused of undermining the morale of French forces in the Gulf by publicly questioning France's participation in the war and claiming that allied objectives in the Persian Gulf risked going beyond those established by the UN.²⁰³ Chevènement had repeatedly called for a diplomatic solution to the crisis, claiming that a war would cause over 100,000 deaths and would permanently alienate France from its traditional ties to the Arab world. He was adamant that France's long-term interests lay in forging closer ties with the Arab world, particularly those countries on the southern Mediterranean shore, rather than in building a federal Europe which

²⁰¹ Howard LaFranchi and Francine S. Kiefer, "Antiwar Sentiment Gains Ground in France and Germany," Christian Science Monitor, 18 January 1991, 6.

²⁰² Jim Hoagland, "Germany: Timidity in a Time of Crisis," Washington Post National Weekly Edition, 4-10 February 1991, 28.

²⁰³ Alan Riding, "French Defense Chief Quits, Opposing Allied War Goals," The New York Times, 30 January 1991, A7.

he believed would become quickly dominated by the Americans.²⁰⁴ Chevènement was replaced by Pierre Joxe, the Interior Minister and a loyal colleague of President Mitterrand, which ended the ambiguity created by the government's divided Gulf strategy.

Throughout the air campaign and the 100 hours of the ground offensive against Iraq, the French fully participated in and continued to express the cohesion of the anti-Iraq coalition. French troops were involved in the ground war immediately upon launching the first attacks and French combat planes continued to strike targets inside and outside Iraq. However, having stood firmly alongside the U.S. during the war, now that the war is over, French differences with Washington over how to win the peace may reemerge.

The French feel confident that their participation in the war has earned them important seats at all future negotiating tables. In the last days before the allied air attacks commenced, President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Rocard emphasized their commitment to an international peace conference on the Middle East and claimed that countries involved in action against Iraq would be morally bound to help settle the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem.²⁰⁵ After the allied victory, Mitterrand again signalled France's intention to play an active and independent role stating, "We

²⁰⁴ "Adieu, dissident," The Economist, 2 February 1991, 46.

²⁰⁵ Riding, "France Puts Force Under U.S.," A10.

will spell out the objectives that we consider just, and no one will give us orders."²⁰⁶

The French claim their interests are founded on an acute awareness that Europe's, and particularly their own, historical, cultural and geographical links to the Arab world make their interests different from those of the United States; France wants to ensure the U.S. is not alone in determining the future of the Middle East region. The French perceive the situation in the region as a time bomb of Arab economic underdevelopment and political frustration.²⁰⁷ Hence, the reason behind the French initially signaling for an immediate international peace conference to tackle the Arab/Israeli crisis and other imminent problems in the aftermath of the war, including a development program to rebuild Iraq.

Then, unexpectedly, France abruptly signaled its desire to work closely with the U.S. in trying to settle the Palestinian and Arab/Israeli problems and announced that France no longer considered an international peace conference on the Middle East essential.²⁰⁸ Conflicting views remain on other smaller issues, however, and confirm the fact that a common approach to all the region's problems has still not been achieved.

²⁰⁶ Alan Riding, "Now Allies and Others Begin Offering Competing Bids for Postwar Future," The New York Times, 1 March 1991, A7.

²⁰⁷ William Echikson, "France and the Arab World," The Christian Science Monitor, 22 February 1991, 19.

²⁰⁸ Alan Riding, "French Seem Willing to Work With U.S. in the Middle East," The New York Times, 14 March 1991, A7; Andrew Rosenthal, "Bush and Mitterrand United On Peace, Divided on Process," The New York Times, 15 March 1991, A7; "Rapprochement," The Economist, 16 March 1991, 20.

The change in approach signifies that the French government, albeit some remaining assertions of a "different" course to peace in the region, realizes that its future lies in binding itself tightly to its European partners in economic, diplomatic and military affairs. Equally important, the French also realize that their future lies in redefining and improving relations with the U.S., which as the current crisis plainly revealed, remains the undisputed leader of the world.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

One author aptly hypothesized that, "from Napoleon III to Mitterrand via de Gaulle, French policy can be interpreted as an attempt to resurrect past grandeur in the absence of the means that had once made it possible."²⁰⁹ France, like Britain, is a medium-sized power whose military defenses and economy are not large enough to stand alone. Even withdrawn from NATO's integrated military structure, France continues to enjoy U.S. nuclear guarantees to Western Europe. Indeed, as previously discussed, France's own independent national security policy is dependent on those guarantees. However, with the reunification of Germany, uncertainty over the future structure of NATO and the type of U.S. commitment to Europe, compounded by diminishing defense expenditures, it appears France may finally need to dispense with the Gaullist rhetoric and relinquish its increasingly unsustainable global strategy.

Mitterrand, while continuing to affirm defense independence, has moved France closer to NATO and the United States. As concerns about the danger of Germany drifting away from NATO toward neutralism mount, France will push harder for the German state to be anchored firmly in NATO and Europe, and will itself probably move even closer to the U.S. and NATO.

Yet to date, the dramatic events of recent years have not led to a reversal of fundamental Gaullist defense positions. Enhanced

²⁰⁹ Hassner, "The View from Paris," 191.

cooperation with the United States has not meant France is now ready to return to NATO's integrated military command. Likewise, enlarged sanctuary has not meant joint decision making - cooperation and consultation have meant exactly that.

Although Mitterrand himself appears to be opening his mind to the Atlanticist viewpoint, he has been politically constrained to keeping his defense policy in line with the Gaullist traditions, particularly the tradition of an independent security policy. Yet with the reality of German reunification and accelerated French efforts to moor Germany to Europe via the EC, it has become increasingly obvious that Mitterrand will eventually be forced to choose between his ingrained fears of supranational institutions and his growing fears of German resurgence. With a series of joint declarations by Kohl and Mitterrand advocating European political and security union, it appears Mitterrand may be slowly moving France toward inclusion in a "Federal Europe."

However, at the same time, the political sensitivity and ambiguity of the current state of international affairs has led numerous French officials, including on occasion Mitterrand himself, to construe that De Gaulle's beliefs are justified now more than ever: in this period of uncertainty, France must maintain its own defense capability. Those who adhere to this line argue further that there now exists the possibility that NATO could abandon its concept of nuclear deterrence for conventional defense. This would be in total conflict with the fundamental premise of French defense policy: deterrence based on the threat of nuclear retaliation.

The recent Gulf war has only reinforced the idea that conventional defense is more applicable today than nuclear deterrence. France's participation in the war and its desire to work closely with the United States has led to a remarkable improvement in relations between the two nations. This warming of relations has apparently even survived in the wake of the war with France signaling its desire to forego any "different" policy to which it had previously alluded, and to instead maintain an approach to the Middle East conflict similar to that of the U.S.

Yet this French warming to American policy choices cannot be said to have resolved French ambivalence: France's Gulf policy was resolved in favor of the Allies as a matter of practicality rather than any assured long-term ideological commitment to U.S. policy goals. Ironically, where under strict Gaullist traditions, French policy choices were previously fairly predictable; now they appear to be totally unpredictable. Although changes in policy are undoubtedly occurring, French security choices remain as before - elusive.

In the final analysis, French security policy remains at a crossroads: the choice is one of pursuing the present course of stressing France's special status based on her traditional nuclear deterrence policy, or firmly acknowledging that the road to enhanced security is through greater cooperation with her NATO and other European allies. What is apparent to date is that although the French purport to espouse the second choice of deeper cooperation through extended bilateral and multilateral cooperation efforts, their actions continue to encourage the now unsatisfactory status quo arrangement. France remains unwilling to return to the NATO

integrated military command and French defense policies continue to be largely national and independent.

The French are in agreement with the Allied consensus that a pan-European structure, such as the CSCE, is largely inadequate to assume the security functions currently performed by NATO. They also believe that argument holds true for the WEU, the EC, or any other existing bilateral or multilateral security arrangement because unlike NATO, they cannot guarantee the U.S. commitment to Europe.

Given that the French acknowledge the value, indeed the necessity, of NATO for their national security, the over-riding question becomes why do French officials continue to undermine, or at least refuse to participate in, efforts to maintain NATO's legitimacy? The only apparent answer to this question is that it is easier for the French to maintain the comfortable and successful status quo, which allows them to claim autonomy of decision and a special status in the world, than to make the painful adjustment inherent in recognition of the current international circumstances. Yet by failing to recognize the need to abandon the Gaullist rhetoric of independence and a privileged world rank, France may miss the opportunity to play a leading role in constructing a new European security order.

Failing to adapt to changing international circumstances and recognize the increasing unsustainability of French independent national security policies, may lead to France's isolation and her subsequent adoption of more nationalistic policies. Some authorities have asserted that a similar reaction could occur if certain supranational elements of the EC's political union, or even perceived

German domination of the current EC structure, seem to threaten France's national identity and decision-making autonomy.²¹⁰ A logical corollary to this argument would be French nuclear-armed neutrality and greater German military, political and economic power in the center of Europe.

The acclaimed French ideal security arrangement of a stronger, more autonomous West European defense posture, centered around close Franco-German relations and a diminished European dependence on the U.S., is the correct approach for France. Now, the words need to be manifested in action: strengthened support for the CSCE in its unique role of bringing together nearly all European states under one forum; renewed support for the WEU as the only European body mandated by treaty to discuss security issues and a likely foundation for developing an autonomous West European defense posture; maintain the momentum of economic and monetary union in the EC - concentration of effort should be focused on trade, with political cohesion being relegated a secondary goal; and increased emphasis on developing more extensive Franco-German relations as this relationship may be the one that matters the most in determining Europe's future. In the long term, this should effect a stronger, more cohesive European defense posture or "European pillar" to complement and reinforce the foundations and institutions of NATO. A stronger commitment by the European NATO nations would also have the effect of reducing the U.S. share of the Alliance burden and Europe's dependence on the U.S. (something the U.S.

²¹⁰ For a discussion of these possibilities see, Yost, "France and the New Europe," 123-125.

strongly desires as well) while still maintaining the vital U.S. commitment that only NATO can guarantee.

The French attachment to the Atlantic Alliance as the framework necessary for keeping the U.S. engaged in Europe needs to be translated into greater participation in the Alliance as a whole. France should resume her seat on the NATO Planning Committee and upon NATO's adoption of a more political role for the Alliance, begin to play a much greater role in the Alliance initiatives. Moreover, France should offer NATO, as it did Germany, consultation on the use of French tactical nuclear weapons during war time if the battlefield situation allows it, and also consultation on the use of nuclear weapons should be arranged during peace time.

Further bilateral and multilateral cooperation efforts in the nuclear, logistic and reinforcement areas would free money for the strengthening of conventional military forces - something which the recent Gulf war has proven is becoming increasingly necessary. A related issue is a need for re-examination of France's nuclear doctrine and a revised policy which would rely less on a nuclear response to threats and more on a conventional one.

As a leading European nation, France could play a major role in reshaping Europe in accordance with its own national security objectives. De Gaulle's ideals fostered a strong impression of French independence and rank, and enabled France to restore its pride and prestige after World War Two. However, the Gaullist myth of French grandeur and independence as a great world power can no longer be sustained. The advantage of increased security through a strengthening of ties with NATO, Western and even non-Western

institutions, must come at the cost of a less independent role. A contributor to much of the current state of European affairs, France remains essential in constructing any European security order and therefore can still play a leading role, although the role may have to be shared equally with Britain and, more likely, Germany. De Gaulle's struggle for independence may have been his most visible one, but his struggle for realism and the European ideal should be his most lasting.

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